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Critical Media Analysis of Female Soldier Representation from Magazines to Instagram: A Cultural Studies Perspective

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Critical Media Analysis of Female Soldier Representation from Magazines to Instagram: A Cultural Studies Perspective

by

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Report

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Dedication

To Shoshana Johnson, Lori Piestewa, and the countless other female soldiers whose lack of representation render their stories, lives, and experiences invisible to media audiences.

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The completion of this thesis report and the pursuit of my master's degree at the University of Texas at Austin has been a transformational experience made possible by several professors, staff, and peers who have engaged my mind and spirit. I must first acknowledge my exceptional thesis report supervisor, Dr. Noah De Lissovoy, who I could always depend on to be an encouraging, patient, and stimulating academic supporter throughout this endeavor. I must thank both him and my second adviser to this work, Dr. Keffrelyn Brown, for exposing me to the important cultural studies work relating to critical media literacy, gender, and representation that inspired this project. Both Dr. De Lissovoy's and Dr. Brown's critical feedback were monumental in the construction of this project, and I want to express my tremendous gratitude for their close readings of this work.

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Abstract

Critical Media Analysis of Female Soldier Representation from Magazines to Instagram: A Cultural Studies Perspective

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Abstract: The purpose of this work is to explore the gendered cultural meanings surrounding female soldier representations found in official print and online military recruiting materials during Global War on Terror (GWOT) period (2001-2014). Using recruitment advertisements found in three popular women's magazines and on the official Instagram accounts of the U.S. military, three research questions are addressed*: 1) What visual and/or textual codes found in female soldier representations are used to construct gendered cultural meanings around women in the military?; 2) How do print and online recruiting materials encourage audiences to co-construct, produce, and distribute these gendered cultural meanings?;* and *3) What is the significance of these gendered cultural meanings and audience interactivity/participation in female soldier representations during the GWOT era?* A visual analysis of the data was performed using critical media guidelines provided by Luke & Iyer (2011) and Kellner (2015, 2013). The findings of this study suggest that there continue to be underlying, embedded notions of essentialized femininity found in contemporary representations of female soldiers. These findings and

military recruiting materials are discussed in relation to broader public discourse around female soldiers and civilian women in society, particularly within important cultural moments of rising fourth-wave feminism and changing patterns of media consumption. In addition, a discussion around the growing need to conceptualize and study audiences as hybridized producers/consumers and as active interpreters of media messages in the digital age is provided. In doing so, this work seeks to understand and recognize the incredible power mass media (particularly social media) audiences have in constructing popular representations of all women. Finally, important implications related to the overwhelming lack of critical gender, media, and military studies in American school-contexts, key sites for military recruiters, are discussed.

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Chapter 1: *Introduction*

After over forty years of open voluntary enlistment, the United States military has grown dependent on the service of women. A declining overall enlistment rate from the post-Gulf War period through the ongoing Global War on Terror (GWOT), combined with significant populations of female enlisted soldiers (17%) and officers (15%) (Defense Manpower Data Center [DMDC], 2014b, 2014a) indicates that today's military relies on the successful recruitment of young women now more than ever to maintain a strong domestic force and international presence. As the GWOT[1] persists, less than 0.5 percent of the American population now serves in the Armed Forces as compared to 12 percent during World War II (Eikenberry & Kennedy, 2013; Wilson & Kamen, 2009). As of May 2014, women comprise just over 15% of the total service population (DMDC, 2014a); thus, there is a significant state interest in maintaining or exceeding the current number of female recruits, who have become vital to defense operations.

Since the inception of the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) in 1973, the military has utilized a variety of marketing strategies to recruit potential enlistees, both male and female. Radio ads and television commercials, billboards, marketing tents at public events (such as county fairs or monster truck rallies), high school recruiting programs such as JROTC, and print advertising in newspapers and magazines have all been used to attract fresh youth to service (Warner, Simon, & Payne, 2003). As the military grows

[1] The "Global War on Terror" moniker has fallen out of popularity and is now known as the "Overseas Contingency Operation" (OCO), a term coined by the Obama administration in 2009 (see Wilson & Kamen, 2009).

dependent on successful female recruitment to, at the least, maintain a stable workforce population, it is important to examine the ways in which the military is using gender in its recruiting materials.

GENDER, MILITARY RECRUITMENT, AND MEDIA

Though gender representations and stereotypes have been thoroughly examined in critical media studies since the 1960s, there are very few studies that have examined the relationship between gender and military recruiting, despite heavy (even blatant) reliance on tropes of masculinity. By-far, recent work by Melissa Brown (2012) provides the most thorough analysis of how gender is used in recruiting advertisements published in popular magazines from 1970 to 2007, finding that individual branches portray varying representations of hybridized masculinities of men and women in their recruitment materials dependent on the degree of their respective masculinized internal cultures. Prior to Brown's work, Megens and Wings (1981) examined the representations of female soldiers in recruiting materials of NATO countries, finding that women were positioned in diminutive roles despite promises of full integration into the male-dominated profession. The only other notable gender and recruiting analysis is from Cynthia Enloe's (1983) book *Does Khaki Become You?*, which discusses feminized recruiting materials.

The western concept of gender is a socially constructed dichotomy, heavily proliferated by the culture and media industries, used to position individuals into 'male' or 'female' categories which delineate ways of being, knowing, and interacting. Mass media created for children and young adults – e.g., cartoons, advertising, films, music, and video games – are mediums in which youth are exposed to gender socialization from an early age (Luke & Iyer, 2011). The manufacturing and commoditization of 'female'

in media representations tends to "symbolically annihilate" (Tuchman, 1978) women by inequitably relegating them to "traditional" domestic spheres, hypersexualized roles, and/or subservient or subordinate positions to men. Media texts "can be seen as the key sites where basic social norms are articulated," (Croteau & Hoynes, 2007, p. 157), and as such, the frequency and consistency of these media messages can be powerful shapers of young women's identities, worldviews, and career choices. Thus, critical media studies focused on gender, such as this one, are imperative for deconstructing how individuals and audiences may interact with such the codes of gender in media in ways that may affect life trajectories.

Particularly in the post-9/11 period, it is important to examine how attempts are made to appeal to women and to wider audiences, given the military's increasing dependence on female recruits and the lack of critical media analyses of gender in recruiting materials. While the attacks of September 11th initially re-invigorated an overwhelming sense of nationalism, enthusiasm and public support for the war dramatically declined over the following decade. In 2003, 64% of Americans were in favor of the war in Iraq, with 33% of those polled opposing military action; those numbers essentially reversed by 2014 with 39% in favor and 54% opposed (Jones, 2014). Despite this lack of public support, the United States continues to have an active presence in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other deemed 'terror' zones (e.g., Syria) throughout the world nearly thirteen years later. With this in mind, the examination of recruiting materials is made all the more interesting because they are, in part, direct attempts to recruit people (mainly youth) to join a cause to which the majority of Americans do not agree. For female recruits, a layer of difference is added considering the military is attempting to convince them to willingly join perhaps the nation's most-highly masculinized institution (though this varies branch to branch).

Rosalind Gill, a media scholar known for her focus on female representation and media culture, once noted the "extraordinary contradictoriness of constructions of gender in today's media" (2007, p. 1). Representations of female soldiers provide fruitful sites for examining these contradictory constructions, and this analysis adds to previous gender, feminist, military, and media scholarship. Gender scholars have long established the military to be a key socio-political institutional site for manufacturing and promulgating notions about masculinity (Enloe, 1993, 1989; Steihm, 1982, 1996; Connell, 1987; D'Amico & Weinstein, 1999; Holm, 1992; Skaine, 1999; Young, 2003), which is important for gendered conceptualizations of citizenship, occupational roles, gender ideologies, nationalism, diplomacy, and force. Because the military is constructed around conceptions of masculinity, gendered marketing strategies are readily apparent in military recruiting materials. Though motivations for choosing to enlist vary widely among women soldiers who do so (Eighmey, 2006; Patten & Parker, 2011; Shields, 1988), female teenagers/young adults have been a historically targeted demographic marketing group, evident by specialized recruitment advertising directed specifically at women (Brown, 2012; Megens & Wings, 1981; Enloe, 1983, 1989). The strategies the military uses to target young women are thus important because they can be indicative of broader cultural semiotic mediations being associated with them. Thus, this paper's examination of the way gender is used and (re-)present(-ed) during the GWOT period brings together previous work in gender, military, critical media, and cultural studies.

In addition to the political backdrop of the GWOT and the gendered foundations of the military, changing patterns of advertising, marketing, and media consumption must also be considered when examining contemporary recruiting materials. The post-9/11-GWOT-era has signaled the emergence of a new generation. During this period, young adults born near the end of the 1982-2000 "millenial" (Strauss & Howe, 2000) cusp have

come-of-[recruiting]-age. The adolescents in this demographic have grown up in a world where physical and virtual realities are nearly one in the same, making them ontologically unique from any previous generation. This significant shift towards participation and interactivity in youth's media consumption calls for fresh analyses of the ways media is manufactured, consumed, and reproduced by audiences.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

These two facets – gendered representations of female soldiers in post 9/11 recruitment materials and changing forms of media and marketing – are of central importance to this investigation. Whereas previous generations were limited to print and audiovisual media representations controlled largely by corporate media conglomerates, millenials have immediate access to new, virtual places for blogging, tweeting, Instagramming, Facebooking, Tumblring, Pinteresting, etc., which allow them to claim and create independent/co-dependent spaces to (re-)define and (re-)represent themselves while collectively identifying with others as well. The combination of new technology, new attitudes towards war involvement and military enlistment, and evolving "fourth-wave" feminism (Baumgardner, 2011; Cochrane, 2013) borne out of the blogosphere (to be discussed in chapter 2), has meant that the military has had to adapt its methods for recruiting women into service to the virtual realm (Bowman, 2013).

This work will explore the gendered cultural meanings within female soldier representations found in official print and online military recruiting materials during the years 2001 to 2014. With the rise in internet accessibility allowing for tremendous user interactivity, participation, and information-gathering, this study is also interested in how the military encourages audiences to co-construct meanings about female soldiers from its own recruiting materials in an effort to get the audience to make enlistment decisions

'on their own'. Additionally, this paper will discuss the significance of how these representations may produce meaning around what it means to be a woman in both the military and society, how audiences interact with these meanings, and how social media impacts the production/consumption of these meanings.

The 2001-2014 time period was chosen as significant because it marks several important cultural events: the beginning of the GWOT, a print advertising downfall and rise of internet and online marketing, and the adolescence of late millenials, who also happen to be of prime military recruiting age. As youth consumption patterns have migrated tremendously to the online world during this period, marketers and advertisers have moved in tandem. With 9 out of 10 reporting regular social media use (Bennett, 2013b) and some surveys finding students ages 8-18 spend over 10 hours a day online (Lepi, 2013), official military recruitment efforts have followed adolescents to the internet (Yeung & Gifford, 2010; Brown, 2012). Today, each branch of the military uses social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, and Twitter, along with official websites to construct a branch-specific cultural identity (see McManus, 2011).

Applying a cultural studies framework for critical media literacy studies developed by Douglas Kellner (2013, 2015), this paper will critically read (Luke, 2003) the discursive texts found in the codes and semiotics of female soldier representation in recruiting materials. The military's political economy of recruitment will be situated within three important cultural moments which today's potential female recruits are living: 1) America's heavy participation in a perpetual but hardly visible war; 2) a transition between third-wave and fourth-wave feminisms and how this relates to 3) the changing informational-entertainment consumption patterns among millenials from magazines to social media. Using military recruiting materials featuring female soldiers found in three popular women's magazines published from 2001-2014 and on the official

U.S. military accounts found on the popular social media site Instagram, the following three research questions will be explored:

1) *What visual and/or textual codes found in female soldier representations are used to construct gendered cultural meanings around women in the military in print and online military recruitment materials?*
2) *How do print and online recruiting materials encourage audiences to co-construct, produce, and distribute these gendered cultural meanings surrounding women in the military?*
3) *What is the significance of these gendered cultural meanings and audience interactivity/participation in female soldier representations, particularly during the GWOT era?*

Significance of work

Through the exploration of these questions, I hope to chart how military recruiting materials can reveal broader public discourse around women in society through its tailored construction of its own public image for, of, and/or about women. In addition, I hope to broaden the discussion around audiences as active interpreters of media messages, and the hybridizing of production/consumption by audiences in the digital age. As lines between advertising and social media become blurred, it is important to recognize how evolving online marketing platforms allow for live co-construction of recruiting narratives by audiences who are actively using the platforms. This may mean that a particular recruiting material created for females may be authored/altered/transformed by any individual who interacts with it. Understanding and recognizing the incredible power that lies within media audiences is important for further discussions in media studies, gender studies, and cultural studies. Finally, I hope to

outline important implications regarding the overwhelming lack of critical gender, media, and military studies in American school-contexts, key sites for military recruiters who attempt to win the "hearts and minds" of young people (Ayers, 2006, p. 594).

Motivations for Research

This research was inspired by a number of events in my life relating to the military and feminism, but was initially sparked by a 2013 news item that caught my eye on one of my favorite feminist-leaning blogs, Jezebel.com. The story commented on a leaked internal memo, written by senior military analyst and Army spokesperson Colonal Lynette Arnhart, who criticized the usage of "pretty" women in official Army materials illustrating female military members (Dries, 2013). Because conventionally attractive women are often stereotypically positioned as incompetent and/or accused of using their looks to climb the career ladder, Col. Arnhart recommended that the Army use "average-looking" women who would not "undermine" the Army's image or invoke critics to ask whether "breaking a nail is considered hazardous duty" (Brannen, 2013; Dries, 2013). Ironically, the photo in question of Corporal Kristine Tejada (shown in Figure 1) was included in an article (Cone, 2013) from the Association of the United States Army magazine, which described the "Soldier 2020" plan – a broad effort to integrate female soldiers into all Army positions, including combat roles (Cook, 2013).

Figure 1: Image of Cpl. Kristine Tejada (pictured) ignites controversy. *Source: Association of the United States Army magazine*, 2013

Colonel Arnhart's comments symbolize deep internal/external tensions between the gendered representations of female soldiers within the masculinist institution of the military and the publically resonating rhetorical constructions of women, which link beauty and physical appearance to intelligence, ability, and power. While this story is just one example of "Miss Representation" (Newsom, et. al., 2011) within a vast, longstanding field of female representation studies carried out among media and feminist scholars, it stood out to me in the way it illuminated how females in the military carry many different meanings with them in comparison to 'typical' females portrayed in other popular media representations. Several scholars (Brown, 2012; Megens & Wings, 1981; Enloe, 1983; Smart, 2000) have explored this fixation on the 'appropriate' way to represent both male and female soldiers within the U.S. military since their full integration into the Armed Forces in 1973. Whereas popular discourse has typically critiqued the silencing and subjugating of women in relation to men (Goffman, 1979; Alexander, 1999; Lin, 1999), female hyper-sexualization (Dworkin, 1979, 1987; MacKinnon, 1987), extraordinarily thin bodies (Plous & Neptune, 2007), and heavy Photoshopping or other image-altering effects (Ross, 2010), the Arnhart scandal represents how the military interestingly finds itself in a contentious position when publicly rejecting these very images of an overly 'beautiful' women.

Aspects from my personal and professional background also influenced this research project. My mother became a single parent at the age of nineteen, and at the age of twenty-two, she made the decision to join the U.S. Air Force. Most of my childhood was spent growing up 'on base', and as a result, I carry with me many experiences which motivate/inform my interest in the military's representation of female soldiers and citizens. I have several memories that can speak to how important the overall concept of 'image' is to the military in general (for example, having to edge your lawn or have your

supervisor be alerted that you were not keeping up your home, or having to continually make sure hair is kept fixed neatly sitting it above the collar of the uniform). I myself am also part of the millennial generation. Born in 1986, I had my first AOL screen name when I was ten years old. Perhaps an early "girl power" feminist (Gonick, 2006), I can remember becoming a regular in several teen chatrooms (particularly the Fiona Apple and Spice Girls chatrooms) and making friends who would become longtime ("e")pen-pals. A couple of weeks before I went to college, I created my first Facebook account, which I continue to actively use for keeping in touch and informed with the daily thoughts, musings, and activities of my friends and family. After college, I became a teacher and taught middle school for five years. Throughout this time, I noticed how pervasive and important the Internet and social media was to the everyday lives of my students, especially compared to my own middle school experience, which occurred only eight years prior to my first year teaching. After being exposed to critical media literacy and feminist work in my graduate studies, my personal background, professional teaching experience, and critical cultural lens merged to develop this project.

OUTLINE OF THIS WORK

This chapter has provided an overview of the topics at interest: gender, the military, media, representation, and the rapid emergence and prevalence of online and social media consumption by youth. Chapter 2 will frame the study by: 1) providing an overview of relevant literature on female soldier representation, 2) outlining feminist work which has positioned the military as a promulgator of gender ideology reliant on these social constructions for its existence, and 3) theoretically framing media consumption and military recruitment materials around gender and youth in relation to magazines and online media from 2001-2014. In the initial outline of feminist work, I

will additionally provide an overview of the 'wave theory' of feminism, with particular focus on the most recent third and fourth waves. Though scholars criticize its lack of flexibility and inclusivity (Springer, 2002), the feminism wave model is given attention in this work because it can be applied loosely to the data used in this study. By outlining feminism's development, parallel developments in military advertising and social media activity for/towards/about women may be more easily recognized.

Chapter 3 will provide an outline of the study methodology, including: 1) description of data sources, selection rationale, and process for data collection and analysis, and 2) the guidelines for representation and critical media studies, including coding/decoding/interpretive processes, followed in this work. My own researcher positionality and its potential effects on this study's analysis and findings are also discussed.

Chapter 4 will present the findings of this study and will be organized around the research questions presented earlier in this chapter. Three themes which emerged from the visual and textual cues within the data will be discussed: 1) the cultural trope/ritual of "giving away/exchanging of women", 2) reversing female domestication, and 3) female soldiers as public relations tools. Each theme will be discussed in relation to their significance to gender studies and feminist movements, female representation, and American militarism. The latter part of this chapter will focus on research questions two and three by exploring the ways military marketing implores audiences to interact with recruiting materials, and the significance of this audience interactivity.

Chapter 5 will close by providing a discussion around the significance of the study's themes found in female soldier representation and audience interactivity with recruitment materials during the GWOT era. Several implications for the findings will be discussed, including how the military positions itself in relation to women, and how this

calls for a heightened critical media literacy curricula in schools. In addition, fourth-wave feminism is discussed in relationship to female representation and social media usage/consumption. Further questions related to this study's implications are discussed and posed to future authors of similar studies.

Chapter 2: *Theoretical Framework*

This chapter will engage with three theoretical lenses to situate the cultural meanings of female soldiers in military recruiting materials: representation, feminist perspectives on gender and military, and media studies (see Figure 2 below). These three topics will frame the discussion to follow in chapters 4 and 5.

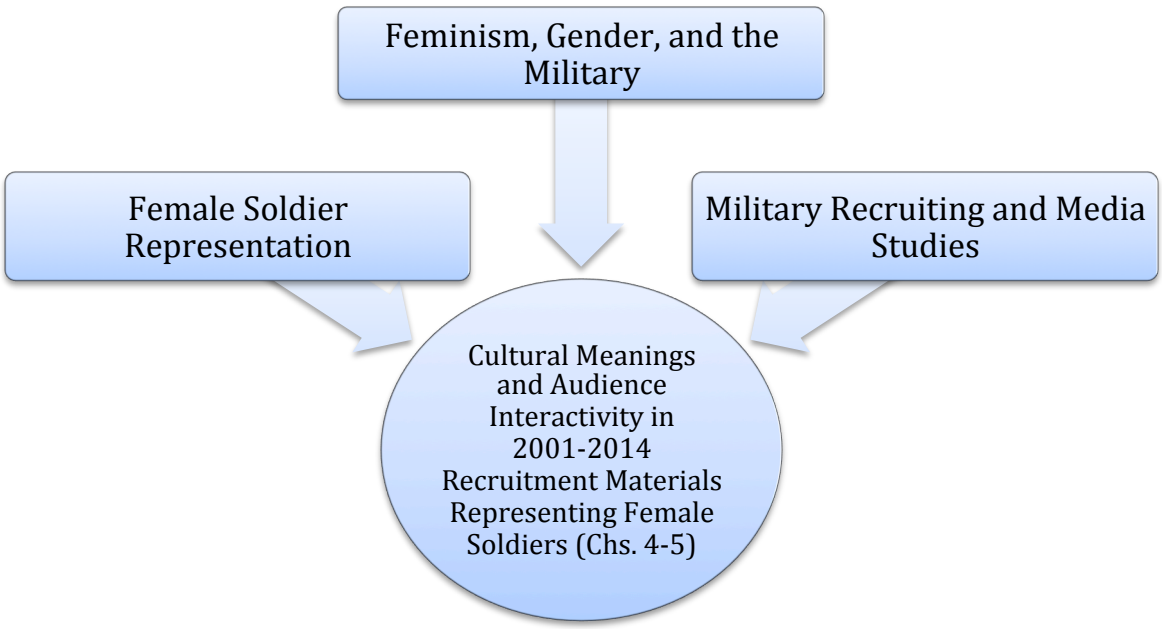

Figure 2: Literature and theoretical framework situating current analysis of female soldier representation

FEMALE SOLDIER REPRESENTATION

Representation analyses are one of the cornerstones of cultural studies work. Stuart Hall, of England's Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (BCCS), is perhaps the most renowned representation scholar, known for his critical contributions (1979, 1997) against the dominant structuralism present in the field during

the decades of second and third wave feminism. According to these views, visual/textual codes of media could change, but underlying consumption patterns/structures of audience interactivity remained inflexibly rigid. McRobbie, also of BCCS, expanded on Hall's notions of representation and reality by making a conceptual distinction between popular images and stereotypes that arise from lived experiences, agreeing with Hall in suggesting that these two are never separate entities. Rather, everyday life is co-constructed with the material pre-conditions that represent it. For young women in particular, McRobbie argues, this is a distinct process which involves both inward stressors girls place upon themselves because of antagonistic responses placed upon them by the public (McRobbie, 2000). During the nineties (or, third-wave feminism), there was heightened focus on economies of production, technologies of production, and the power relationships in consumption and production (Luke & Iyer, 2011; Buckingham, 2003; & Louw, 2001), and as a result, many representation studies shifted from focusing on embedded semiotics. This study combines both approaches by embracing visual analysis techniques (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001) while also deconstructing various powers of production involved in military recruitment materials.

Conceptualizing the Female Soldier

To understand the ways women soldiers are popularly represented, the socio-historical construction/conceptualization of the western soldier archetype must first be outlined. Existing around a *protector/protected* dichotomy (Steihm, 1982), the imagined 'soldier' is created in a masculinized state that holds a monopoly on authorizing the use of legitimate force (Weber, 1919/1946) and is spatially located within a vulnerable feminized homeland (Pankov, Mihelj, & Bajt, 2011; Cohler, 2006). A protector has burdensome and weak dependents (the protected) who do not have his access to violent

force; therefore, in wartime, the role of the protected is to make it easier for their protectors to kill for them, and by extension, protect national security. Female archetypes and other 'protecteds', such as the young, old, highly valued (superiors like the President), and even despised (e.g., homosexuals), are relegated to support roles, and thus by definition are also essential and necessary for the protector (soldier) to exist (Steihm, 1982; Howard & Prividera, 2004). Because of this daunting role, soldier archetypes hold some of the most powerful, and importantly, most recognizable positions in society – typically signified by various masculine semiotics of war, including male bodies (Connell, 1990; Carruthers, 2008), positions of privilege (Howard & Prividera, 2006; Ross & Carter, 2011; Giroux, 2004), guns (Pomerance & Sakeris, 2000), and uniforms (Adie, 2003; Wheelwright, 1989). This archetype, and the rhetoric which supports it, (in-)visibly underlies all popular representations of female soldiers.

Popular Representations of Female Soldiers

From the moment women were invited to participate in war-time activities, they have been portrayed as sexual beings. In the WWII era, news stories expressed dismay at women who co-opted masculine military fashion (Meyer, 1996), while musical plays (a popular entertainment medium of the time) embraced the "women-in-uniform" spectacle by putting women actors in form-fitting, feminized versions of soldier uniforms (Wills, 2000). Sexualized representations were embraced by the military from WWII/postwar period through the Gulf War, perhaps best exemplified by a 1980s recruiting brochure which explained, "Some of the best soldiers wear lipstick" (Enloe, 1983).

These sex-positive Hollywoodized depictions of female fantasy warriors versus characterizations of 'real' women soldiers do not always transfer across representations, however. The period from the 1990s to present opened new spaces for the woman soldier

to be conceptualized within, as women have been granted enrollment at historically all-male training academies and their participation in combat has swelled. Highly influenced by news stories of sexual abuse, harassment, and third-wave gendered politics within these previously inaccessible male military cultures, real women soldiers have been increasingly portrayed in more dramatic, serious, and/or scandalous roles, often related to their conspicuous sexualized female identities. An emerging genre, "rape-revenge", often features an independent, powerful avenger or investigator (in long-running series *NCIS* and *Jag,* for example) who seeks to punish men for sexual crimes carried out on women soldiers or women victims in general (Read, 2000; Tasker, 2011). In this way, the woman soldier/avenger is portrayed as 'liberated' a *feminist* warrior, but still a *feminine* victim (Read, 2000).

Blockbuster Hollywood films such as *G.I. Jane* and *The General's Daughter* have also drawn upon the rape narrative to illustrate the sexual disciplining and punishment women soldiers face when attempting to gain entrance to elite masculine military circles (Williams, 2004; Tasker, 2002; Read, 2000). Military officials at training academies and boot-camps have been popularly represented by their overzealous usage of pejorative feminized/sexualized insults towards young male cadets. As fresh recruits, these men earn their solider [male] status through unquestioning obedience intended to prove their 'manhood' by desensitizing themselves to sexualized taunts such as "lady", "bitch", "woman", etc. (Stiehm, 1982). This pedagogical technique, which celebrates conventionally accepted derogatory linguistic conditioning strategies that demonize female sexuality, is a result of a long history of patriarchal normalization of female sexual behavior. Importantly, this history also informs what popular representations consider the major 'problem' with female soldiers: *they are the cause* of sexual scandals when placed in the company of male soldiers (Tasker, 2011; Freedman, 1990; Gronnvoll,

2007; Holland, 2006; Wills, 2000; Nantais & Lee, 1999). The disciplining and policing of 'proper' male and female sexuality only further solidifies the unyielding power and privilege associated with the masculinized soldier archetype.

Falling under the third-wave feminist umbrella, Showtime's 2004-2009 series *The L Word* centers around the lives of a group of Los Angeles lesbians. The show was critically acclaimed for its dedication in representing the nuanced lives of lesbians while also heavily incorporating pressing social queer issues such as trans-transitioning, artificial insemination for lesbian couples, and homophobia in professional sports – many of these inspired by fans encouraged to submit their own story concepts to the shows' writers (Hebberd, 2005). In season 4, a prominent issue introduced was the lesbian identity of Tasha Williams, an Army National Guard military police member, under the 1993 Clinton administrations' "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT) policy, which codified homophobia in the military. This extended plotline continued into season 5, and soon after its final 6th season aired, President Obama repealed DADT during his first 100 days in office. Media scholars have termed this an example of "policy-tainment" – which is the way the media industry's political economy is able to produce critiques of existing government policies through the usage of critical racial/sexual representations, ultimately influencing real public policy reform for these groups (Scheper, 2014).

The idea of policy-tainment is an important tangential concept to this study in its connection to the ways in which media representations, popular and/or subcultured, can powerfully inform public action on an issue of social justice. The ways in which female soldiers are represented by the military itself produce the normalized climate for which these resistant representations can arise. This study's focus on official representations of female soldiers provides an important framing for future studies that may investigate the

ways in which fictional and non-fictional representations oppose, reproduce, or transform these dominant images.

FEMINISM, GENDER, AND THE MILITARY

As discussed, feminists and media analysts have shown that the very existence of the U.S. military *relies* on a strict gender binary (Enloe, 1990, 1994b, 2000; Stiehm, 1982; Chodorow, 1974). These circulated messages have as much to do with the official policing of masculinity as they do with imperialist and capitalist desires of the military. The woman soldier is a paradox whose presence disrupts deeply entrenched, strict patriarchal norms of society. As a 'woman', she can never fully attain 'soldier' status, as it is based on masculinist notions of strength, aggression, patriotism, and heroism. A woman soldier can therefore be used to highlight fixed roles society has assigned to females: mother, supporter, caretaker, and victim, to name a few. Particularly in times of war, the woman soldier becomes an integral site for examining the construction, reproduction, and enforcement of the male/female binary code on which highly militaristic societies (such as the United States) are built. Because the mere presence of the woman soldier confronts and contests contradictions of masculine military culture (which inherently arise when positioned within a 'democratic' nation), research has focused on the ways the military and media have churned out negotiated narratives addressing the 'role' of the woman soldier. These 'official' narratives created for public consumption reveal the socio-historical cultural politics surrounding nationalized, gendered, and sexualized notions of the woman, the soldier, and the society. Here, using the 'wave' model of feminism, I want to take time to outline how the development of public feminist resistance movements can be used to understand military recruitment during the GWOT.

Evolving Feminisms: The Wave Model

First-Wave Feminism: 18th Century-1919

Western feminism is a broad social movement that has evolved since its origins in 18th century Europe. A popular model used to chart its development is the 'wave' model. Typically, feminism's historical development has been separated into three 'waves': first, second, and third (Humm, 1995; Krolokke & Sorenson, 2005). British feminist Mary Wollstonecraft is considered a precursor to the 'first-wave' American feminist movement, led by women such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Sojourner Truth, Lucretia Mott, and Susan B. Anthony. Influenced by French revolutionaries' critiques of paternalism and patriarchy, Wollstonecraft sparked early feminist revolutionary discourse by arguing that societal betterment relied on women's equal access to education (Wollstonecraft, 1792/2009; Kaplan, 1991). First-wave feminists, known often as the *suffragettes,* have been subsequently defined by their focus on the elimination of important *de jure* gender inequalities – such as women's suffrage, property rights, work rights, and educational access. The passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1919 is generally considered to be the end of the first-wave (Dicker, 2008). In relation to the military, women's very limited inclusion in WWI wartime efforts would constitute some of its own internal first-wave feminist developments.

Second-Wave Feminism: 1920-1980

The post-WWII era brought about 'second-wave' feminism, which moved past the participatory stance of first-wave feminism and towards a more agentic approach focused on *de facto* aspects of women's inequality. Set in a notably politically liberal era, second-wave feminism has strong roots in French feminist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir's (1989/1949) critique of the gendered construction of the woman as the 'other'

within patriarchal societies. The argument in her pivotal work, *The Second Sex,* made a strong effort to disconnect biological sex from longstanding western ideologically inferior conceptualizations of femininity. Prominent American feminists, such as Betty Friedan (1963) and Gloria Steinem (1963), extended de Beauvoir's gendered critique of normalized patriarchal control over the female sex by applying them to the restrictive discourses surrounding 'appropriate' female behavior in the early 1960s. Calling for a more agentic approach towards womanhood, second-wave feminism tackled issues such as reproductive rights and contraception, equal pay, sexual harassment and discrimination, egalitarian marriage/relationships, standards of female beauty, and equity rather than access into former 'boy's clubs' such as elite universities and the military (Baxandall & Gordon, 2005). During WWII, women were actively recruited for service and held many, mostly peripheral positions such as phone operating, nursing, and/or administrative work.

Third-wave feminism: 1980s-late 2000s

The rise of third-wave feminism is complex, as it gave rise to new mainstream versions of feminism as well as a wide range of sub-feminisms, which are important to acknowledge in its overall development, and in how it affected both the military and media. Culturally, it is important to frame this wave as part of an extended period of neoliberalism, which provides the political context for the development of mainstream and subcultural feminist movements. Neoliberalism, in short, refers to "the set of national and international policies that call for business domination of all social affairs with minimal countervailing force" (McChesney, 2001). It is characterized by hyper-individualism, pro-capitalist policy, deregulation, and privatization.

A critical mass of neoliberal deregulatory policy was directed at commercial media and communication markets, which saw the rise of cable news while public television funds were slashed. Anti-government, pro-corporate policy allowed media giants such as Rupert Murdoch, CBS, Disney, Comcast, and Time Warner to form part of what's known as the global "media oligopoly" (Baker, 2006), essentially replacing state-run ownership with private ownership. The rise of media oligopoly coincided with radical, global advancements in communication and broadcasting technology. Corporate media conglomerates were creating new, specialized accessible-from-home markets as consumers signed up for cable television, talk radio, demographically targeted magazines, and of course, the internet. As a result, tensions between ideologies of capitalism, structures of patriarchy, female identity, and technology emerge during feminism's third-wave.

Non-western third-wave feminism

Scholars characterize the larger, non-western third-wave movement as a postmodern, deconstructionist response to the modernist, structuralist western tenets and cultural realities of first- and second-wave feminism. These third-wave feminists espouse attentiveness to identity-politic complexities in an era of powerful global capitalism, technological revolution, and changing media consumption patterns. They also recognize that marginalized women face multifaceted layered oppression(s) that first- and second-wave feminism do not adequately address (Dicker & Piepmeier, 2003). Non-western third-wave feminists challenge the prevailing white, western, heteronormative, middle class narratives of feminism, which lack historical attention to/representation of non-white, non-western, and queer global feminist movements (hooks, 1984, 1983; Combahee River Collective, 1983/1977; Anzaldúa, 1999; Hill Collins, 2000). By

privileging/assuming that progress made within first- and second-wave movements was the *only* progress made towards dismantling oppressive gender-based structures, the important contributions and struggles of other non-white, non-western women around the world were ignored or, worse yet, appropriated (Mohanty, 2003).[2] Many instances of this type of western bias are seen in criticisms of military history, which often feature histories of white male soldiers, leaving soldiers of color and female soldiers who dutifully served invisible and silenced.

The third-wave also resists co-optation and commodification of women's sexualities by stressing women's agency in finding a self-fulfilling style and performativity, whether that comes in a desexualized, hyper-sexual, or traditionally feminine fashion (also known as 'lipstick', 'cupcake', or 'girlie' feminism) (Baumgardner & Richards, 2004, 2000). The 'G.I. Jane' trope would fall under this facet of third-wave feminism, in that Demi Moore's character actively resists the feminization and sexualization of her body during her intensively abusive Marine training. The third-wave also openly established a pro-girl-culture without the hesitation of the second-wave because "believing that feminine things are weak means that we're believing our own bad press" (Baumgardner & Richards, 2000, pp. 134-135). This can be seen in larger 'sex-positive' political movements found in third-wave feminist political resistance

[2] In addition to excluding the complex, intersectional disadvantages of women of color, third-wave feminists criticize the ethnocentrism of straight, white, middle-class women's 'struggles' (Lorde, 1984). For example, the re-vamped liberal feminist centering of women's corporate career mobility without a challenge to the deeply embedded patriarchal culture of corporate America – exemplified by the recent popularity of the term "lean in" coined by Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg (see Sandberg, 2013) – has been deemed as a form of 'corporate feminism' (Marcotte, 2014) or '(neo-)liberal feminism' (hooks, 2013). Some notable critical stances against western feminism can be found in postcolonial/third-world/transnational feminism (Mohanty, 2003; Ahmed, 1998; Alexander & Mohanty, 1997), black feminism (Hill Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1991; hooks, 1989) and the related womanism (Walker, 1979, 2003; Dove, 1998), multiracial or women of color feminism (Zinn & Dill, 1996), chicana feminism (Anzaldúa, 1999; Garcia, 1997), and trans-feminism/queer theory (Butler, 1990; Kosofsky Sedgwick, 1990).

movements, such as SlutWalks and the SuicideGirls (Nguyen, 2013; Friedman & Valenti, 2008).

Fourth-Wave Feminism: 2008-Present

Borne in an era where the internet is everyday (or perhaps more accurately, every-moment) life, the existence of the fourth-wave is still emerging, evolving, and explicating its goals. Much like the third-wave, media and politics are shaping its formation, along with continued challenges to anything considered essentially 'feminine' or anyone considered essentially a 'woman' (for example, the Arnhart scandal and resulting backlash would certainly fall under fourth-wave). At the same time, categorical differences between certain raced, classed, sexed, and other groups of women continue to inform and formulate important separatist feminisms and/or amalgamated hybrid feminisms. Some uniting ideologies among fourth-wavers include generally heightened critical stances towards misogyny and sexism, patriarchy, heteronormativity, cultural white supremacy, corporate media, and environmental sustainability.

Jennifer Baumgardner (2011) asserts that the dawn of the fourth-wave feminist movement became visible in 2008. Baumgardner suggests that the lead-up to Obama's 2008 election created the new political climate for a critical mass of young feminists to emerge – not onstage, or at rallies or demonstrations – but *online*. This new generation of young feminists have unique temporal identities shaped by the prevalence of internet access and speed, social media, and information technology: "their experience of the online universe was that it was just a part of life, not something that landed in their world like an alien spaceship when they were twenty or fifty" (Baumgardner, 2011, p. 250). In a study on the rise of the UK's fourth-wave feminist movement, Kira Cochrane (2013) documents how feminist activist groups (such as UK Feminista) cannot keep up with the

demand for feminist conferences, activities, meeting groups, and talks, which fill up or sell out nearly immediately on their website.

This important transition from third-to-fourth wave is 'e-[m]bodied' in a proliferation of feminist blogging and micro-blogging (e.g., Twitter), hashtag activism, consumption of feminist-leaning online media such as Jezebel and Racialicious, and varying types of social commentary/editorial outlets such as Facebook and Tumblr. The internet plays a significant role in providing fourth-wave feminists with easily-accessible collective and individual virtual 'spaces', and because of information technology, we also know that these spaces are in high-demand. Deborah Solomon, the founder and editor the blog Feministing.com – which was the most widely read feminist publication as of 2009 – has agreed with Baumgardner's assertion that fourth-wave feminism exists, and it exists online (Solomon, 2009). This is not to characterize fourth-wave activity as existing solely in the virtual realm, but rather to recognize the active role of the internet in informing, communication, collaboration, and organization of real world events.

Fourth-wave discourse extends the postmodern legacies of the third-wave, particularly in developing conversation and critique around gender's relationship to sexuality.[3] The rising acceptance of 'queer' sexual identities can itself been seen as a critique of the pervasive hegemonic gender binaries and state-endorsement of various heterosexual preferences, such as 'traditional' marriage. We can see this in the military's backpedalling from their previously staunchly homophobic stance. In this way, the

[3] One of the effects of the sex-positive third-wave was an acceptance of 'coming-out', noted by the 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, and the later establishment of the internationally observed "National Coming Out Day" (Human Rights Campaign, 2014). Non-heterosexual identities are more publicly visible and normalized in the fourth-wave; as a result, its generation is: 1) very likely to know someone who identifies as gay, lesbian, or bisexual (Morales, 2009), and 2) widely supportive of the civil and legal protections for LBGTQ populations (Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project, 2011).

fourth-wave comes closer than any other wave to directly addressing the patriarchal roots of our political structure, which bases itself on another questionable binary of liberal/conservative. The fourth-wave perhaps represents a rejection of all binaries, and de-centers attempts to categorize individuals on any single salient aspect of identity.[4] The fourth-wave's emphasis on new technology and social media, gender and sexual identities, and patriarchal hegemony is important when reading military recruitment materials.

Feminism and Femininity in the Masculine Military Institution

> One of [the institutions'] central functions is to reproduce the sexual division of labor so that girls come willingly to accept their subordinate status in society. This work is done primarily through ideologies which hare rooted in and carried out in, the material practices specific to each of these institutions. The question here is how successful are they? To what extent do the girls concede to these ideological offensives and how do they respond to their demands? (McRobbie, 2000, p. 52).

There is no simple answer to the question above, and while this research does not attempt to provide an answer, it acknowledges the tremendous significance of McRobbie's inquiry. By looking at how the military institution perpetuates these sexual divisions or labor in throughout moments of third and fourth wave feminisms in their media representations of female soldiers, we can perhaps come closer to understanding whether females *do* find empowerment in the military or if it continues to be a disempowering cultural space for women. Popular media and military rhetoric have historically claimed the armed forces to be an avenue for gender equity and mobility that

[4] The fourth-wave also reconnects spirituality and environmental studies to feminist activism rooted in social justice. An interesting example of this type of fourth-wave feminism is "ecofeminism" (perhaps a re-invisioning of the hippie/flower-girl movement of the second-wave), which connects the global history of patriarchal colonialism and imperialism to the ecological destruction of the Earth (Gaard, 2011; Mack-Canty, 2004; Gaard & Gruen, 1993). Ecofeminism combines aspects of indigenous epistemologies (see Chilisa, 2012) with social debates around women's access to food, shelter, and land (Mallory, 2013).

creates and/or advances social equality (Rustad, 1982; Gledhill & Swanson, 1996), yet military policies continue to exclude women from holding privileged roles, particularly those associated with combat (Nantais & Lee, 1999; Holland, 2006). By looking specifically at how these media materials speak to women themselves and force them to engage and interact (especially online materials) with these messages, we can thoughtfully analyze the extent to which the institution is *interested* in maintaining these strict sexual/gendered divisions, or if we have moved into an era where that division signifies something different.

Colonel Arnhart's memo asserted that feminine beauty negates the masculine image of the military. Her commentary evokes similar questions brought up by McRobbie, who questioned sociological "homages to masculinity" (McRobbie, 2000, p. 35) in feminized media texts. In her feminist critique of Hebdige's findings on masculine performances of sexuality, she notes how sexual ambiguity for women remains "more or less unavailable to girls. For working-class girls especially, the road to 'straight' sexuality still permits few deviations." (McRobbie, 2000, p. 36). If McRobbie's theory holds true, women's roles, participation, and representation as members of/in the military will always be constrained and defined by their gendered and sexualized identities, because of the gender-specific processes of membership within the masculine subculture of the military. McRobbie's critiques are interesting to this study because in the case of the United States military, feminine sexuality seems to 'distract' from the collective warrior mission to defend and protect the country. In other words, if a woman is represented to be too 'womanly' or feminine, the military's fiercely masculine reputation may be in danger of taking a hit.

However, given the development of feminisms and the backlash to Col. Arnhart's memo, it may also be said that female soldiers' deviations from traditional conceptions of

femininity can also be interpreted as a sign of military 'progressiveness' in relation to gender and culture. Some popular, typically conservative, rhetoric asserts that women hold their own privileged position within masculine, capitalist subcultures firmly rooted in ideologies of meritocracy – a type of "female privilege" (Bell, 2013) existing in the reflection of the anti-patriarchal term "male privilege" (Phillips & Phillips, 2009; McIntosh, 2003). An example of this concept being applied to female soldiers would be to say that drill sergeants or superiors may 'take it easy' on women compared to the treatment or harassment of men, or perhaps that females may be 'lucky' to have a desk job versus a combat role. Feminists have identified this rhetoric as being casually sexist, and have replaced the idea of female privilege with the more appropriate phrase "benevolent sexism", defined as "subjectively benevolent, characterizing women as pure creatures who ought to be protected, supported, and adored… simultaneously [implying] that they are weak and best suited for conventional gender roles" (Glick & Fiske, 2001, p. 109).

Thus, the ways in which femininity and masculinity are reconciled in recruiting materials are of particular interest to this work's analysis, because again, public attitude is of primary concern when it comes to enlisting soldiers willing to sign their lives away. In addition, public responses are revealing of the ways female bodies are policed and controlled across (sub)culture and particularly within media. As illustrated by Colonel Arnhart's memo, there is little doubt that military is highly aware of its vulnerability to this public response and must therefore constantly tailor its media strategies to minimize public recoil.

MEDIA STUDIES AND MILITARY RECRUITING

Because this study is interested in advertising in popular magazines as well as in online recruiting materials, it is important to position military recruiting within the larger discourse of mass marketing and popular culture. Popular culture, once commoditized, holds a paradoxical status because it at once encompasses interests of the people while also serving to profit the industrialized entities which produce it. Despite this industrialization, it is important to note that culture itself is never representative of any mass. The term 'mass culture' can even be understood as a contradiction, because as Fiske (1989) describes:

> Culture is a living, active process; it can be developed only from within, it cannot be imposed from without or above. … A homogenous, externally produced culture cannot be sold ready-made to the masses: culture simply does not work like that. Nor do the people behave or live like the masses, an aggregation of alienated, one-dimensional persons whose only consciousness is false, whose only relationship to the system that enslaves them is one of unwitting (if not willing) dupes. (Fiske, 1989, p. 24)

Military recruiting marketing materials produced for women cannot be understood as popular culture for several reasons; among them being: no 'product' is being sold, the producer is the State, and the audience is not a 'popular' mass. It is a pretty demographically specific group of people – young, physically and mentally qualified, working-class, and in this case, female. Other characteristics such as ambitious, politically conservative, nationalistic, patriotic, pro-military, or adventurous could also be added. This study is interested in the ways the military taps into 'popular culture' as constructed by magazines 'for women', while simultaneously existing as an organization defined by masculinity, patriarchy, and violence. In some ways, this ideology of difference may be part of the military strategy. These materials may be better understood as a negotiation between the masculine, patriarchal, colonialist/imperialist

Department of Defense and the popular conceptions of femininity and women's temporally-specific positionality in the societal world of work.

While military recruitment materials are not considered pop culture, the link between military recruiting and popular culture is albeit important for distribution reasons. Popular cultural publications and broadcasts are used to transform these ideologies into a palatable message – as Fiske writes,

> A text that is to be made into popular culture must, then, contain both the forces of domination and the opportunities to speak against them, the opportunities to oppose or evade them from subordinated, but not totally disempowered, positions. Popular culture is made by the people at the **interface** between the products of the culture industries and everyday life. (1989, p. 25)

In this way, military marketing *can* be understood as part of the 'cultural economy', which consists of the audience as the producer, meanings and pleasures as the commodity, and individuals as consumers (Fiske, 1989). Meanings and pleasures are the commodities circulated rather than physical goods, services, or consumables.

Gender, youth, and women's magazines

Youth culture has regularly been studied through examining patterns of consumption. There are several explanations for the reoccurrence of this particular method: youth may be quicker to spend their money on consumables versus investments or day-to-day survival needs, and thus in their more immediate spending habits, desires and temptations among generations can be revealed by looking at how they spend their time and money. Without rent, mortgages, car payments, utility bills, or other 'adult' expenses, youth 'spending' (time and money) is also important to study because it can simultaneously reveal what youth have *access* to consume, and through what medium they are obtaining this access.

The twentieth century saw an enormous rise in the consumption of magazines across all generations. In 1999, teenagers aged 15 to 18 spent an average of 13 minutes a day reading magazines (Henry A. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2004). Female magazines have been a popular research data source among media scholars, partly because of the way women are addressed as raceless, classless, homogenous groups (McRobbie, 2000). Ideological standpoints of women's magazines can construct what values and messages are being published about what is 'natural', 'sensible', 'presentable' and/or 'normal'. Previous analyses of women's magazines have revealed the overwhelming focus on physical appearance, make-up, hair, beauty products, and clothing (Fuller, 2005). Depending on the research motivation, previous studies analyzing female representation in women's magazines have used a variety of criteria for selecting specific periodicals, such as target age (McRobbie, 2000; Currie, 1999), wide and/or specialized audience (Brown, 2012), product analysis (Winship, 1987; Johnson & Lloyd, 2004), editorial rhetoric (McCracken, 1993), sexualized/feminized discourse (Tincknell, Chambers, Van Loon, & Hudson, 2003; Macdonald, 1995), or audience studies (Hermes, 1995; Currie, 1999; Frazer, 1987). The presence of military recruitment materials in women's magazines is of interest because they seemingly conflict with the messages these magazines may be trying to construct.

Magazine studies, like other media studies, have fallen victim to what McRobbie (2000, pp. 70-71) refers to as a 'traditionalist' analyses. In these studies, magazines are considered part of popular mass high culture, and audiences consume these materials uncritically. These views do not account for the many ways audiences bring their own qualities to reading and production of these materials themselves. These critiques mirror Stuart Hall's (1997) overall critique of representation studies which imply a clean exchange of ideas, images, and beliefs. 'Conspiracy' analyses take an Orwellian

approach by viewing publishers and broadcasters as plotting puppeteers of docile, ideologically moldable working-class consumers. McRobbie critiques this approach's myopic ahistoricism, and rudimentary separation of public/private sectors of production and consumption. The third camp roots itself in subcultural and youth sociological frameworks, which assert that mass culture of production is an expressive outlet for youth, defined in opposition or in resistance to adulthood.

All of these frameworks assume that sub-middle-class groups have no power in the magazine market, when that is undoubtedly not the case. The presence of military marketing within these materials exemplifies an acknowledgement of working-class demographics, but also represents another school of thought, which Hall et. al. (1978) label the 'laissez-faire' approach. This school of thought holds that media is more of a 'window' which reflects pre-existing desires and interests of mass culture but doesn't shape them. This study sides with the constructivist nature of the laissez-faire approach, while acknowledging the very real goal of military marketing which is to convince people – in this case, young women and their parents – to sign their lives away in the name of national defense. This type of marketing differs in that it does not attempt to grasp at leisure – rather, it uses the magazine platform to recruit *workers*. Thus, choice and freedom in this case is more concerned with occupational life path versus beauty or fashion.

Critical Media Literacy in the Age of Social Media

When the Arnhart story broke, it did what most controversial stories do today: spread like wildfire across news outlets and social media websites. A quick Google search for the story 8 months later provides over 42,000 links, with sites such as the *UK Daily Mail, Politico, Time, NY Daily News, Army Times, Slate, NBC News*, and Colonel

Arnhart's personal *LinkedIn* profile in the top 10 results. The immense online backlash to Colonel Arnhart's assessment of female soldier representation, particularly among feminists, signifies an important intersection between feminist and representational studies. It also exemplifies how new forms of communications and media, increasingly social media, are re-defining modern social interaction.

As a central component of most youth social lives, social media becomes an outlet for youth to construct their own identities and express them to others. Teenagers and those aged 18-29 have the highest rates of internet use with rates cited up to 95% (The Pew Research Center, 2012), and as teenage media consumption moves from magazines to online, marketing has followed. As social media is so quickly emerging and evolving, few scholars have developed specific tools for analyzing online media and online activity. One useful model is found in a new essay titled "Cultural Studies, Multiculturalism, and Media Culture", Douglas Kellner (2015, 2013) outlines how to apply cultural studies to critical studies to modern mass media. He provides three guidelines, paraphrased below:

1) **Political economy/production –** provide socioeconomic context leading to the creation of media product being analyzed;
2) **Textual analysis –** Use particular verbal, visual, auditory, and/or textual codes to analyze the constructed meanings of the media product;
3) **Audience reception –** Ethnographically determine how real-world audiences may contribute, produce, and/or distribute these cultural products.

Kellner's model is useful particularly because of its emphasis on audience reception. In addition, Luke (2007) adds to Kellner by emphasizing the importance of gender representation in new media and critical media literacy studies. She and Radha Iyer (2011, p. 437) pose additional questions which will be used to guide the analyses in

chapters 4-6, such as: *How varied and diverse, and how representative of society are these [female] portrayals? Is there sufficient variation in representations, or are these variations mere extensions of the same stereotype? What constructs of masculinity and femininity are included and excluded in a given text? How do dominant discourses function through content selections and production features to marginalize some constructs of gender and valorize others?*

This study's research questions: *1) What visual and/or textual codes found in female soldier representations are used to construct gendered cultural meanings around women in the military in print and online military recruitment materials; 2) How do print and online recruiting materials encourage audiences to co-construct, produce, and distribute these gendered cultural meanings surrounding women in the military?;* and *3) What is the significance of audience interactivity in female soldier representations, particularly during the GWOT era?*, were formulated using Kellner's guidelines. Much of the socioeconomic context surrounding women in the military, young female consumers, and feminist theory has been provided in this chapter. Thus, this study's findings and analysis in chapter 4 will center around Kellner's second and third guidelines focused on textual analysis and audience reception. The following methodology section in chapter 3 will further elaborate on the socio-political economies of production surrounding the two primary sources of data: magazine recruitment advertisements and postings from the official Instagram accounts of the U.S. military.

Chapter 3: *Methodology*

As chapters 1 and 2 outlined, this study is interested in the cultural meanings produced around female soldiers in their representations found in official military recruitment materials during the GWOT era (2001-present). Tangentially, this study also inquires into how these gendered positionings/representations of female soldiers, found in both print and online marketing materials, encourage audiences to interact/engage with and distribute the product (in this case, the initiation of enlistment). Three research questions (below), constructed around Kellner's (2015, 2013) textual analysis and audience reception suggestions, will be used in chapters 4 to analyze and discuss recruiting materials:

1) *What visual and/or textual codes found in female soldier representations are used to construct gendered cultural meanings around women in the military in print and online military recruitment materials?*
2) *How do print and online recruiting materials encourage audiences to co-construct, produce, and distribute these gendered cultural meanings surrounding women in the military?*
3) *What is the significance of audience interactivity in female soldier representations, particularly during the GWOT era?*

Sources of data

The data for this study was collected from two sources:

1) magazine recruitment advertisements printed in three popular women's magazines; and
2) images from the official Instagram accounts of the U.S. military.

The time period this study is interested in examining is limited to the Global War on Terror era. As such, magazine data was collected from September 2001 to March 2014. Depending on the specific branch account, Instagram data was available from July 2012-July 2014.

Motivations for Data Sources: Magazines

Unmet recruitment goals and low retention rates caused the Department of Defense to double its 5-year recruitment and retention budget spending from $2 billion to $4 billion dollars (Department of Defense, 1999) in the year 2000. According to a 2003 internal memo from the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO), more than half of this spending was used on national media campaigns, which includes magazine advertisements. In this memo, a specific marketing strategy was also revealed: magazine advertisements would be marketed towards "target influencers of prospective recruits" and would seek to "make young people aware of a military service, the career options available in a service, and other opportunities the services have to offer them" (U.S. GAO, 2003). This is one of the primary reasons magazines were chosen for analysis.

Another reason magazines were chosen as a data source for this study is because of their wide distributive reach during the GWOT era. Though American internet use was becoming increasingly ubiquitous by September 2001, the print magazine industry was also still in its prime. In 1998, a total of 1,076 new consumer magazines were launched, and by 1999, there were 2,520 consumer magazines in circulation (Randle, 2001; Magazine Publishers of America, 2000). Increased specialization, low cost (subscription or single-purchase), wide accessibility, and a period of economic stability meant that in 2000, about 1 out of every 4 Americans – approximately 73 million people

– reported reading "a magazine in print yesterday" (Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, 2012).

Magazines were also chosen is because they are fruitful and easily accessible reserves for the print advertisements sought in this study. In 2003, nearly half of all pages in most consumer magazines were advertisements, with the average ratio of advertising to editorial pages in print magazines being approximately 48% to 52% (MPA – The Association of Magazine Media, 2013). As a result, nearly 60% of all consumer magazine revenue is generated from advertising (Pew Research Journalism Project, 2014).

Magazine Selection

Because this study is concerned with female soldier representation, women's magazines were chosen because they would presumably provide more gendered recruitment marketing featuring female soldiers versus men's magazines. Drawing from publicly released marketing strategy information revealed in the previously mentioned 2003 Department of Defense memo (U.S. General Accounting Office, 2003), indicating targeted marketing strategies, three magazines were selected and are listed below (with a brief explanation):

1) ***Better Homes and Gardens*** *(BH&G)*: the most widely-circulated American women's magazine (7.6 million per monthly issue); older median age (50.9) of women readers fit into GAO's category of "target influencers" (e.g., mothers, grandmothers) (Meredith Corporation, 2014).
2) ***People***: widely-circulated (3.5 million per weekly issue) with a largely-female (72%) demographic; broad target age range with median age of readership at 44.4 (Time, Inc., 2014).

3) ***Seventeen***: most widely-circulated magazine targeted directly at female teenagers (3.9 million per monthly issue, 3.6 million of those being female); median age 16.4 (Hearst Corporation, 2014).

Predominantly female audiences, young age of recruits, and parental influence were all deciding factors for choosing to examine the magazines above. Large readerships of the selected magazines were also important factors in selection, because wide readership is valuable to advertisers looking to reach a large audience. In 2011, *BH&G* and *People* were the top two industry earners, collecting over $1.7 billion dollars in advertising revenue out of the $20.1 billion dollar industry (Flamm, 2012). The sheer profit being earned by these magazines indicates their willingness to dedicate significant space to potential marketers. In addition to audience reach and availability of advertisements, age of readership is important because it attempts to define the 'naturally occurring' roles women in its audience should be undertaking; i.e., adolescence into adulthood, adulthood, or adult motherhood/home-making/child-rearing and caring. The audiences of *BH&G, People,* and *Seventeen* all attempt to speak to the 'typical' woman within a specific target age; but, because potential female soldiers aren't considered a 'typical' mainstream audience, there is an interesting tension here between the medium of consumption and the messages found in recruiting marketing within magazines.

Motivations for Data Sources: Instagram

> Instagram is a fun and quirky way to share your life with friends through a series of pictures. Snap a photo with your mobile phone, then choose a filter to transform the image into a memory to keep around forever. We're building Instagram to allow you to experience moments in your friends' lives through pictures as they happen. We imagine a world more connected through photos. (Instagram, Inc., 2014)

Before the rise of the internet, the military traditionally relied on print/film/television advertising, JROTC programs, family networks, and recruiting officers to recruit young students seeking alternative post-secondary options (Warner, Simon, & Payne, 2003; Brown, 2012). Today's teenagers are more digitally active than ever before (Pew Research Internet Project Teen Fact Sheet, 2013), with 8-18 year olds spending over 10 hours a day online (Lepi, 2013) and 9 out of 10 teenagers reporting using social media regularly (Bennett, 2013b). The military has responded by broadening recruitment efforts to the digital sphere (Yeung & Gifford, 2010; Brown, 2012), using the internet and the power of social media as primary marketing tools.

The surging popularity of the popular website and mobile phone application Instagram currently places it as the preferred social media platform of teenagers over Facebook and Twitter (Stern, 2013; Piper Jaffray Co., 2014), social media sites which teens now categorize as for "mom and dad" (Bosker, 2014). Because of its highly engaged and large youth market, Instagram is a particularly lucrative site for investigating how each branch cultivates its public image of/relationship with its female soldiers, and for exploring how audiences respond to these representations. As of late 2013, 20% of female cell phone users ages 18 and older use the application, with over 43% of 18-29 year olds reporting using the app, 56% of which are female users (Pew Research Center, 2013). Launched in October 2010 as a free downloadable application, the official Instagram blog (blog.Instagram.com) states it currently has over 200 million active users as of April 2014. Seventy percent of users log in at least once per day (Bennett, 2013a), with at least 35% reporting they check their 'feeds' multiple times per day (Pew Research Internet Project, 2013). It's $1 billion purchase by the social media giant Facebook in 2012 exemplifies its market value for advertisers and marketers who pay to glean user data from the site (Raice & Ante, 2013).

Because it is a platform built around sharing only photos (and as of August 2013, videos as well), Instagram also provides one of the 'cleanest' platforms from which to acquire data. Unlike Facebook and Twitter, which allow for text-only posts, or for hundreds of photos and/or videos to be uploaded at once, all of the user-uploaded content on Instagram is limited to either one image or video per post with an accompanying caption. This is beneficial to this study for several reasons. First, each individual photo post and accompanying caption is very similar in format to traditional print advertisements. Second, all of the posts from public user accounts (such as the military's accounts) are located in one 'stream' that can be accessed by any user on the Internet. Lastly, the artistic element involved in choosing photos to upload, filters to apply, and/or hashtags to associate, all work to build a specific identity that user intends to portray to its audiences.

Interactive features of Instagram

Finally, the interactive features and availability of audience information are two of the most powerful and interesting facets of using Instagram to gather data. There are four noteworthy features I will briefly explain: the "@" feature, the hashtag ("#"), the like feature ("❤"), and the comment feature.

Instagram usernames are defined using an "@" symbol followed by the user-created handle. For example, the official Instagram username of the University of Texas at Austin is @utaustintx. The "@" symbol is a tool which can be used to communicate with other users. For example, if I were to post a picture which I wanted to UT Austin to see, then I would post that photo with "@utaustintx" in the caption. This would alert the owner of the @utaustintx Instagram account and allow them to view my photo.

The hashtag feature allows users to categorize their photos and discover others' photos. For example, if I posted a photo of a full stadium on the opening day of UT Longhorn football, I may choose to use the hashtags #football, #UT, #hookem. This places my photo into a crowd-source of three separate feeds with other users who have used the same hashtags. I could then view a feed of *all* photos which have the #football, #UT, or #hookem hashtag from any user around the globe.

The like feature is denoted by a button shaped like a heart (❤), and is automatically placed in every post uploaded to Instagram. When a user likes a photo, his/her username is projected underneath the "liked" photo. A count of total likes is kept, and once it reaches over 10 users, only some usernames may be shown with the number of other users who "liked" the photo. A comment feed is also automatically attached to any photo uploaded to Instagram. If a user wishes to comment on a photo, they may type their message into the comment box feature, which will appear alongside the photo when it is entered. Below in Figure 3, a typical Instagram post in which the @, hashtag, like, and comment features are utilized, is shown:

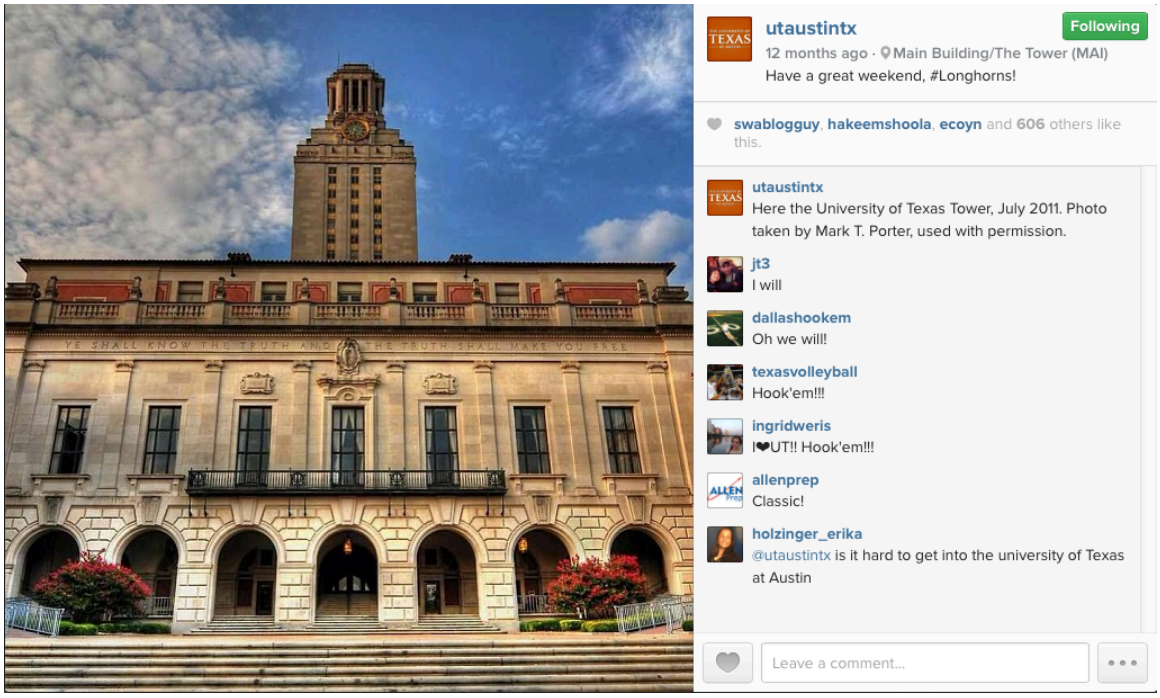

Figure 3: A post from the official University of Texas at Austin's Instagram account displaying the use of several interactive user features.

Military Instagram Account Selection

This study chose to gather data from the official Instagram accounts of the five main branches of active-duty military: the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marines, and Navy. Their Instagram usernames and descriptions (as of July 15, 2014) are listed below:

1) Air Force (@officialusairforce): **U.S. Air Force** Fly, fight, win in air, and cyberspace. Use #airforce. Keep your comments clean. External links/following ≠ endorsement. http://www.af.mil
2) Army (@usarmy): **United States Army** Welcome to the #USArmy's official Instagram page, which is currently being updated with exclusive photos of #MedalOfHonor recipient SSG Ryan M. Pitts.

3) Coast Guard (@uscg): **U.S. Coast Guard** Official account of the U.S. Coast Guard. This week we will be sharing #safeboatingtips to keep everyone safe on the water! http://www.uscg.mil
4) Marines (@marines): **United States Marine Corps** Official account of the U.S. Marine Corps. Follow for the Corps' best imagery and Marine photographer exclusives. http://www.marines.mil
5) Navy (@usnavy): **US Navy** Official account of the U.S. Navy. http://www.navy.mil

An important note about the Army's Instagram account is necessary here. Despite being active since August 19, 2013 and having over 27,000 followers, the Army had only 5 total posts on its account, none of which featured women. Thus, the sample was reduced to four accounts: the Air Force, Coast Guard, Marines, and Navy.

SUMMARY OF DATA AND ANALYSIS

Magazine data summary

Over the 2001-2014 surveyed time period, there was one singular dominant marketing campaign featuring female soldiers (or future female soldiers, as will be explained in chapter 4). This campaign was called 'Today's Military' and it directed audiences to the military's website, *Todaysmilitary.com*. As chapter 4 will detail, the beginning of this time period (2001-2003) featured ads which profiled real-life individual soldiers, depicted as either currently serving or in post-military life. Beginning in 2003, however, the content of the advertisements changed to a more serious recruiting campaign, which depicted nameless potential future recruits and their parents.

This change in campaign direction lasted until 2012. After this period, these particular campaign advertisements ceased from these magazines. Unfortunately,

because this was the only campaign specifically featuring female soldiers (unlike other campaigns such as *"An Army of One"* or Marines advertising featuring indistinguishable soldiers), the sample was limited to nine individual advertisements, all of which will be discussed in chapter 4. All of these advertisements were found in all three magazines unless otherwise noted.

Instagram data summary

Table 1 below summarizes the images found on Instagram. Initially, any images with women were included in the sample; therefore, many images collected featured civilian women. Those images not including female soldiers specifically were later excluded from analysis in order to focus on the 66 images featuring female soldiers from the four accounts surveyed. Of those 66 images, exactly half (33) prominently featured female soldiers.

	Date Instagram Account Established	Number of Followers (as of July 15, 2014)	Total Number of Instagram Posts as of March 31, 2014	Total Number of Instagram Posts Featuring Women	Total Number of Posts in which Female Soldiers Prominently Featured	Total Number of Posts in which Female Soldiers are in Background or Peripheral Roles	Total Number of Posts in which Women are Civilians
Air Force (@officialusairforce)	7/25/12	15,711	187	22	15	4	3
Percent of Total Posts			-	11.76%	8.02%	2.14%	1.60%
Percent of Posts with Women			-	-	68.18%	18.18%	13.64%
Army (@usarmy)	8/19/13	27,937	5	0	0	0	0
Percent of Total Posts			-	0.00%	-	-	-
Percent of Posts with Women			-	-	-	-	-
Coast Guard (@uscg)	1/1/14	10,481	165	20	11	8	1
Percent of Total Posts			-	12.12%	6.67%	4.85%	0.61%
Percent of Posts with Women			-	-	55%	40%	5%
Marines (@marines)	7/31/13	91,008	237	16	6	2	8
Percent of Total Posts			-	6.80%	2.53%	0.84%	3.38%
Percent of Posts with Women			-	-	37.50%	12.50%	50%
Navy (@usnavy)	8/13/13	33,781	92	8	1	3	4
Percent of Total Posts			-	8.70%	1.09%	3.26%	4.35%
Percent of Posts with Women			-	-	12.50%	37.50%	50%
Totals	-	179,278	686	66	33	17	16

Table 1: Female Soldier and Civilian Female Representation on Official Military Instagram Accounts, July 2012-March 2014

Data Collection

As this study is primarily interested in the representation of female soldiers, only those advertisements and images depicting current or future female soldiers were chosen for analysis. Images were excluded if female soldiers were indistinctly or indistinguishably present, such as in large ceremonies or in shadowed photos where gender was indeterminable. The methodological process for data collection and analysis fell into four phases: 1) magazine data collection; 2) preliminary coding of magazine data; 3) online data collection; and 4) final coding and generation of overall themes. A brief description of each phase follows.

The first phase was magazine data collection. Magazine recruitment advertisements from January 2001 to January 2014 were gathered using the university library's print archives. Although these magazines are available electronically through the university library, advertisements are omitted in online archives. Thus, each available issue of each magazine was physically (and tediously) examined. Missing issues, more frequent for the weekly *People* magazine, were not examined, but consisted of only around 5% of the overall number of issues published during this time for all magazines examined. As recruitment advertisements were discovered, a running list was compiled including publication data and a brief content description. This collection process revealed the use of one singular, dominant campaign (identified by the slogan *"Today's Military")* targeted at parents and recruits, and a few smaller, less-prevalent branch-specific campaigns directed primarily at recruits (e.g., *"GoArmy.com"* or *"The Few. The Proud. The Marines.")*. Therefore, all three magazines contained many identical ads being printed recurrently through the duration of these national campaigns. Once a full list for all three magazines was complete, advertisements featuring future, current, or veteran female soldiers, and in addition those featuring other prominent females (such as

mothers) were scanned into an electronic format. As the study focus sharpened and the data set grew in the subsequent online stage, images featuring civilian were later excluded in order to focus uniquely on representations of female soldiers.

The second phase of data analysis involved generating preliminary themes found in the semiotics of print advertisements using Luke's "cultural coding" method (2003, p.199). This method involves applying critical/feminist theory to a visual analysis of semiotics such as color, indicators of social class and how they may indicate feminized notions of beauty or sexuality, camera angles, lighting, positioning of actors and gazes, etc. As a result, the three preliminary themes which emerged were: 1) the cultural trope/ritual of "giving away/exchanging of women", 2) the incongruence of femininity in the military, and 3) parents as public relations.

These preliminary themes generated from magazine data collection were important in framing the third stage of data collection that took place online. During this phase, each of the five individual branch's Instagram pages was visited. Unlike the print campaigns, which relied on a limited number of singular-page ad messages to draw young women into recruiting offices, Instagram provides a platform for the military to distribute an unlimited amount of carefully constructed messages regarding a military life/career, essentially creating a 'virtual recruiting office'. Thus, every photo posted on each Instagram account was examined and coded individually *and* in relation to the preliminary themes, in order to get a more complete idea of the ways each branch represented its female soldiers. As online materials can change periodically and in real-time, it is important to note that the collection for these materials took place between May and July of 2014. During this time period, there were no noticeable changes to any branch's Instagram profile content. Any noticeable changes were limited to minor modifications such as updates to a user profile description or additional postings.

Because magazine advertisements were only collected through March of 2014, Instagram posts were also limited to March 31, 2014. No posts after that date were considered in this analysis.

Coding Data and Generating Themes

The fourth and final stage of data collection involved coding the Instagram data set and generating a comprehensive set of themes applicable to both print and online data. The sample of online images and text featuring female soldiers were also culturally coded (Luke, 2003), but the larger sample and broader content of the unique images featuring female soldiers on Instagram (66 versus 9 found in magazines) required a more methodical process of coding than was necessary in the magazine data collection stage. First, simple codes based on semiotic and textual analysis methods (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001) were used to categorize the content of 66 images featuring female soldiers. For example, "ceremony", "physical training", and "returning from deployment" were common content codes for each account. These codes are listed in Table 2. Again, while civilian female data is included, it was eliminated from further analysis in the generating of themes discussion of cultural meanings found in representations of female soldiers chapter 4.

	How Women are Featured - Category as Determined by Semiotic and Textual Coding / Total number of Posts		
Air Force	Promotional/Social Media 7 Ceremonial 5 Dog/Puppy Caretaker 3	Physical Training 2 Spouses, Wives, Girlfriends 2 Leadership 1	Volunteering 1
Coast Guard	Boot Camp/Physical Training 5 Ceremonial 5 On-the-Job 4	Featured Profile 4 Fun/Friendship 1 Studying 1	
Marines	Male Marines Coming Home to Women 4 Marine Training 3 Promotional 3	Women/Children Being Protected 2 Women in Combat Feature 2 On-the-Job 1	Ceremonial 1
Navy	Male Sailors Coming Home to Women 3 On-the-Job 2 Leisure/Playing Around 1	Ceremonial 1 Promotional 1	
Totals	Promotional/Social Media/Profile Feature 15	Boot Camp/Physical Training/Tactical Training 14	Ceremonial 12
	Women as military spouses 9	On-the-job/Studying 7	Fun/Leisure/Volunteering/Dog caretaking 6
	Leadership 1		

Table 2: Summary of Instagram Visual Data, Coded

After coding, preliminary themes gathered in the magazine data collection process were applied to the Instagram data and re-examined/adjusted to reflect the overall

sample. To remind the reader, the preliminary themes after magazine analysis were: 1) the cultural trope/ritual of "giving away/exchanging of women", 2) the incongruence of femininity in the military, and 3) parents as public relations. The first theme was also salient in the Instagram data and thus remained unaltered. The second theme was clarified – rather than simply focusing on the way the recruiting materials communicated fundamental incongruence between civilian femininity and military femininity, the Instagram data expounded on this aspect by communicating that domestic femininity would be replaced with military femininity. As chapter 4 will explain, the military uses Instagram to show this will be achieved through physical training, the handling and operation of combat weapons and heavy machinery, and pursuing masculinized career paths such as engineering. The third theme, originally limited to parents as public relations, was adjusted to focus on the ways female soldiers were positioned as public relations tools. While the magazines did implore parents to gather information about military careers to share with their potential recruits, it simultaneously positioned recruits to convince parents to seek out information as well. In the Instagram materials as well as early print materials, there were several additional examples using female soldiers as marketing tools. For these reasons, the final three themes resulting from this multi-step coding process which this paper will explore are as follows: 1) *the cultural trope/ritual of "giving away/exchanging of women",* 2) *reversing female domestication, and* 3) *female soldiers as public relations tools*.

Limitations of Study

There are several limitations to this study. First, this study only examines recruiting materials featuring female soldiers (or female recruits). This was a conscious decision made in order to limit the scope of this project, as including representations of

male soldiers during this time period would substantially increase the sample of advertisements used for analysis. However, the lack of a comparative approach limits the findings because readers must assume that the narratives/themes associated with female soldier representation are unique to female soldiers.

Further, the focus on gender may limit discussion of other relevant factors – such as race, class, and sexuality – which may be as important to acknowledge when examining these recruiting materials. Attempts are made to engage with these factors when relevant, yet even this approach is limited to my reading of 'phenotypic' cues such as skin/hair/eye color, styling, and/or names (when provided). Because gender itself is a social construction, this analysis also privileges the cisgendered (Schilt &Westbrook, 2009) category of 'female', and in effect, may silence females (or males) in the military who do not identify with this category.

The final limitation presented here relates to the rapid speed of information uploaded to the internet each second and the difficulty this presents to researchers attempting to present contemporary and relevant findings. Because of this constantly evolving nature of the internet, though audience interactivity is a main topic of interest in this study, thorough analysis of commentary on Instagram was not fully attainable. This was again a decision made to make this project manageable. Future studies of this nature could expand on this study by discursively analyzing user commentary for online recruiting materials during a specific time period of interest. As online materials change so rapidly, there is a chance that the by the time this work is in press, the findings presented in this study will already be out-of-date.

Feminist Researcher Positionality

There is an established tradition within women and gender studies, particularly among women authors, to introduce the motivations behind their work through revealing personal narratives and experiences, which this study introduced in chapter 1. It is important to note that as a researcher, I am not immune to the intricate subtleties of advertising and marketing. While reading these advertisements, I am also constructing meaning through my own experiences and interactions with the text and images. Thus, this work is presented using Donna Haraway's (1988) feminist epistemological stance of ethnographic "situated knowledges", which acknowledges that my own socio-historical location as a researcher privileges my partial knowledges of subjects or materials, who have their own situated knowledges. With this in mind, I also strived to practice reflexivity throughout this process to avoid projecting my personal beliefs and experiences onto the experiences of female soldiers and recruiters by using chapter two to ground the historical, social, political, and economic context(s) around gender and recruiting. Any seemingly 'unfair' bias and/or subjectivity projected in the following chapters are presented with this presentation of my personal feminist research positionality.

Chapter 4: *Findings*

INTRODUCTION: TODAY'S MILITARY CAMPAIGN

In early 2001 before 9/11, the military was running a campaign called "Today's Military". Only five advertisements created for this campaign were discovered in this analysis – one for each branch of service. The general theme and format for these advertisements consisted of soldiers being extolled, lauded, and admired by family members who previously held doubts about their children's decision to enlist. All soldiers were represented in full uniform, perhaps signifying their full transition into the military world, and inviting the audience to partake in the spectacle and awe of military prestige the families were feeling. Four of the five advertisements featured male soldiers, with the Coast Guard being the singular branch to feature a female, replacing the "he's" and "son" in the dominant caption to read: "*She's not just my daughter, she's my hero.*"

This ad, shown in Figure 4, describes how Tammy, a young African American female soldier shown beaming with her parents, came home "smarter, stronger, and full of confidence" as a result of military training and educational benefits. Unlike the other ads, Tammy is positioned very close to her parents versus the male soldiers who took up more personal space, indicating Tammy's parents are still feeling protective of her. Additionally, Tammy's parents are at eye-level with her; in contrast, other ads feature children and mothers looking up to their male soldiers. In the subtext of the advertisement, parents like Tammy's are encouraged to visit the website being promoted, Todaysmilitary.com, with their teenager to "begin to feel the special pride and satisfaction that only comes with a child's growing success."

Shortly after September 11th, only one additional example of this series of advertisements from this campaign was discovered in an October issue of *People*. This

ad, shown in Figure 5, features Latina Naval Navigation Specialist Rosemary Harris in her work setting. Harris is shown in a Navy uniform lacking stripes or medals (perhaps indicating a low rank), facing the camera directly with a bright white smile, natural makeup, and dark brunette hair pulled back covered by a Navy cap. Long, fake fingernails are seen on Harris' left hand. In her hands, she is holding some sort of tools presumably associated with her navigational occupation. In the subtext box, an additional photo of a civilian-clothed Harris and her family shows them seated on an outdoor bench, with Harris smiling and looking into her father's eyes (seated to her left), while her mother (flanking her to the right) grasps Harris' right hand in her own lap. Her parents, Miguel and Maria Gonzales, express the pride they have for their Navy daughter in a quote from the subtext box: "When we saw her at work on board the ship, we couldn't believe it. Our baby was a mature adult with serious responsibilities. We feel very proud of all that she has done."

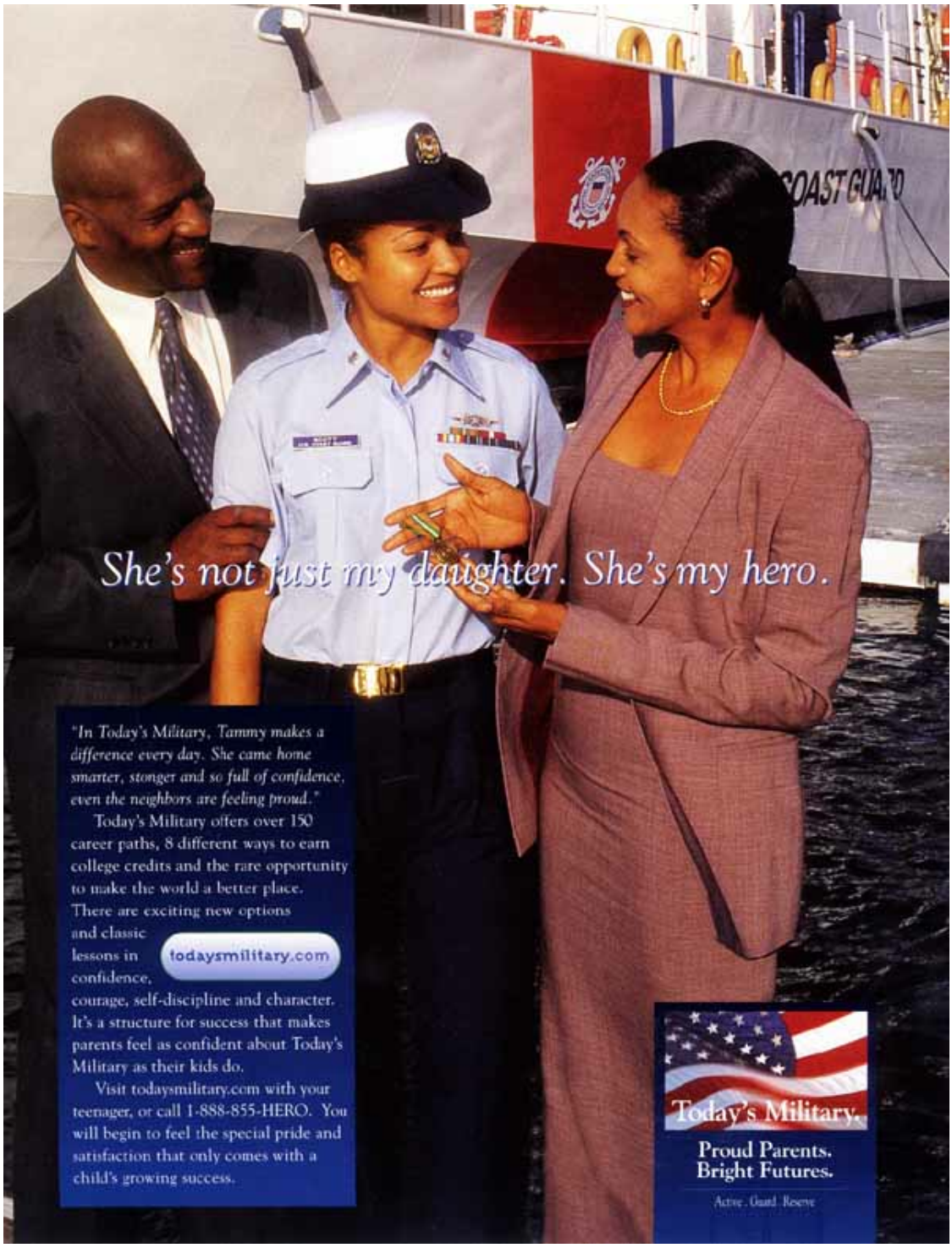

Figure 4: "Today's Military" Coast Guard advertisement featuring "Tammy", 2001.

Figure 5: "Today's Military" advertisement featuring Navy Navigation Specialist Rosemary Harris, 2001.

Tammy & Rosemary: Representation of Female Soldiers & Military Recruiting Before 9/11

The Today's Military ads featuring Tammy and Rosemary provide a window into how female soldiers were being represented by the military immediately prior to 9/11, and additionally, some facets of these military women's representation reveal aspects of third-wave feminism and female soldier positionality. In addition, the ways these women are presented as military subjects before the GWOT conflict are important for further comparison to later materials.

Third-Wave Feminism in Tammy & Rosemary Ads

In these ads, three sub-narratives relating to the femininity of female soldiers – opportunity, surprise, and attachment – accompany these women's portrayals. These narratives can be used to engage with the evolving conceptualizations of female soldiers in context of third-wave feminism pre-9/11. In Tammy and Rosemary's recruitment materials, the military is described as a place where soldiers can acquire college credit, choose from hundreds of careers, travel, and "make the world a better place". This narrative of 'opportunity' is inherently contrasted with the civilian world. Audiences, particularly female readers, are primed to reflect on their own opportunities in the civilian world, i.e., *How easy is it for me to go to college? What careers are open and available to me? What opportunities do I have to travel the world? How am I making the world a better place?*

Regardless of reader, it seems the military is making an assumption that females in the civilian world who are interested in joining the military during this time are still being cut off from accessing a quality education, choosing a career they enjoy or wish to pursue, traveling, or participating in the global social justice effort. Connecting this to

the wave model of feminism, this strategy utilizes non-western third-wave discourse focused on the lives/experiences of females of color. The military seems to recognize the idea that even in 2001, there are still many females – namely, African American (Tammy) and Latina (Rosemary) – who do not have access to these life options. By highlighting their positive experiences in the military, the military uses Tammy and Rosemary to capitalize on their non-white female audiences (and families).

Extending from this opportunity narrative is a narrative of 'surprise'. Both Tammy and Rosemary's parents were furthermore astounded by the strength, discipline, intelligence, independence, and communication skills their daughters brought home with them after joining the military. Here, the military slyly incorporates generalized deficit ideologies of female ability and social/emotional intelligence by assuming Tammy and Rosemary lacked these qualities before entering service. The loving tone exuded from the parents providing these backhanded compliments masks the insulting nature of this praise. Additionally, it reifies the positioning of females in the military as lacking essentialized masculinized qualities males are assumed to 'naturally' bring with them– aggressive confidence/arrogance, tactical knowledge/skills, and maturity, and loyal obedience (Howard & Prividera, 2006; Young, 2003; Enloe, 1994; Wheelwright, 1989; Shields, 1988; Steihm, 1982; Tasker, 2002).

Finally, it is interesting to deconstruct the idea of 'attachment' in Tammy and Rosemary's representations, and how this idea positions them as female soldiers in different ways. While they tend to be feminized from those within the military (à la *G.I. Jane*), females who join the military are generally masculinized from those outside of the force. Thus, potential recruits who are not in the military are given several cues that these women are still *women* – and because of this, they still belong to others. In Tammy's case, she returns home to her parents, but even "the neighbors" share in her

accomplishments. Rosemary is a more complex case. Her subtly Latina appearance, confounded by the prominent display of her last name Harris, is confirmed by the revelation of her parents' Gonzalez surname. Upon close inspection, Rosemary is wearing a wedding ring in the smaller photo, signifying her marriage to a man (as Don't Ask Don't Tell would not be repealed for another nine years). In Rosemary's case, the military takes advantage of the ways females tend to be masculinized from outside of the military as single, tomboy warriors looking for a physical challenge. Rosemary seems to hold a cushy Naval position that allows her to get her nails done and presumably allows her to maintain a happy marriage. While her husband is not shown, it is assumed that he supports Rosemary's career choice – and through this ad, the military cues the audience to believe that this is because of the variety of ways the military 'helps' females successfully navigate their lives.

Militarism

Tammy and Rosemary are both conventionally attractive women who are appear to be comfortable and de-stressed with their job. This may come as a surprise to non-military audience members, who may expect soldiers to be engaged in physically exhausting tasks or nerve-racking duties. This easygoing tone must be put into context in the pre-9/11 world. Faced with recruiting shortages, perhaps the military was also attempting to make its 'workplace' appear less strenuous than popular depictions. And, given that America had not participated in any extended military conflicts since the Gulf War, a job in the military may not have actually been all that stressful during this time. For female recruits, the military may be presenting itself as a workplace that is less stressful and more beneficial for women than workspaces in the civilian world.

Post-9/11 Today's Military Campaign

After this advertisement featuring Rosemary, there were no traces of this series of Today's Military ads in any of the three magazines examined for two years. It is possible that after the attacks of September 11th in 2001 that the military may have suspended advertising, but I could not find concrete evidence of this. What is clear is that during this time, the military was re-fashioning its Today's Military campaign, because in 2003, the ad campaign re-emerged with a new, serious look and distinctly different semiotic codes used to recruit female enlistees. This made-over campaign, featuring both male and female future soldiers from a 'variety' of American families were the most frequently published series during the time analyzed, running until late 2012.

Chapter 4 Outline

This chapter will engaged with the three research questions presented earlier in this study: 1) *What visual and/or textual codes found in female soldier representations are used to construct gendered cultural meanings around women in the military in print and online military recruitment materials?*; 2) *How do print and online recruiting materials encourage audiences to co-construct, produce, and distribute these gendered cultural meanings surrounding women in the military?*; and *3) What is the significance of audience interactivity in female soldier representations, particularly during the GWOT era?*

The chapter will be organized into two main parts. First, the semiotics and textual codes of gender found in the representations of female soldiers in magazines and on the military's Instagram accounts will be described and discussed in relation to the cultural meanings (or, themes) they generated, which were: 1) the cultural trope/ritual of

giving away/exchanging women, 2) reversing female domestication, and 3) female soldiers as public relations tools, or, "utilizing feminine sociability". The second part of this chapter will discuss the influence and significance of audience interactivity in the construction, production, and distribution of the cultural meanings associated with female soldiers.

As chapter two outlined, this study is also interested in the gendered aspects of two important socio-cultural phenomena present throughout this time period: the masculinist militarism of the post-9/11 GWOT world, and the shifting conceptualizations of female/femininity/feminist found throughout the transition from third-to-fourth-wave feminism. Both parts of this chapter will explore the significance of these broader cultural movements to aspects found within the female soldier representations examined, similar to the introduction and discussion of Tammy and Rosemary. The chapter will end with some brief concluding thoughts on the value and limitations of this analysis.

PART I. SEMIOTICS AND CULTURAL MEANINGS IN POST 9/11 FEMALE SOLDIER REPRESENTATION

Theme 1: Who gives away this woman?

The re-vamping of the Today's Military campaign is visually striking. Rather than featuring full-color photos, the ads in the re-modeled campaign only used black, white, and red. While the ads were full-page, the overwhelming majority of the advertisements consisted of two lines of text, typed in either black or red newsroom journalistic font. In the upper left-hand corner of these ads, small boxes inserted a picture of a potential female recruit speaking with family members. The bottom right hand corner places subtext related to the main text and to the website being advertised (Todaysmilitary.com). This new color palette and format projected a remarkably more

fearful undertone, especially when considering the tactics being used to speak to audiences – namely, parents.

This is apparent in the first ad I will discuss. In this ad, shown in Figure 6, the small picture includes the father of a young, white woman, shown with his head bowed and his left arm propped in doorway of his daughter's room with his right arm firmly planted on his hip. The daughter, head also bowed, is seated against her bedroom wall, with her knees held in her hand. Her hair is pulled back, giving her a more 'sporty' appearance, further denoted by the hanging medals earned visible upon close inspection in the top right hand corner of the picture. The text of the ad reads, *Your daughter wants to enlist. After taking one of the deepest breaths of your life, how do you respond?* The additional subtext provides advice for this dilemma: *MAKE IT A TWO-WAY CONVERSATION. GET THE FACTS. TODAYSMILITARY.COM.*

The female 'soldier' in this ad is representative of this campaign's larger narrative: potential enlistees being hindered by the negative perspectives of their parents who lack 'real' knowledge about life in the military. If only their parents could understand the opportunity awaiting them or realize the backwardness of their own worldviews on the military, they wouldn't be in this 'awkward' situation. This ad positions the future recruit below her father, who is portrayed as a gatekeeper to her enlistment. In doing so, rituals of "giving away" women, such as in marriage, or in sending them off to college (see Figure 9), are brought to the surface.

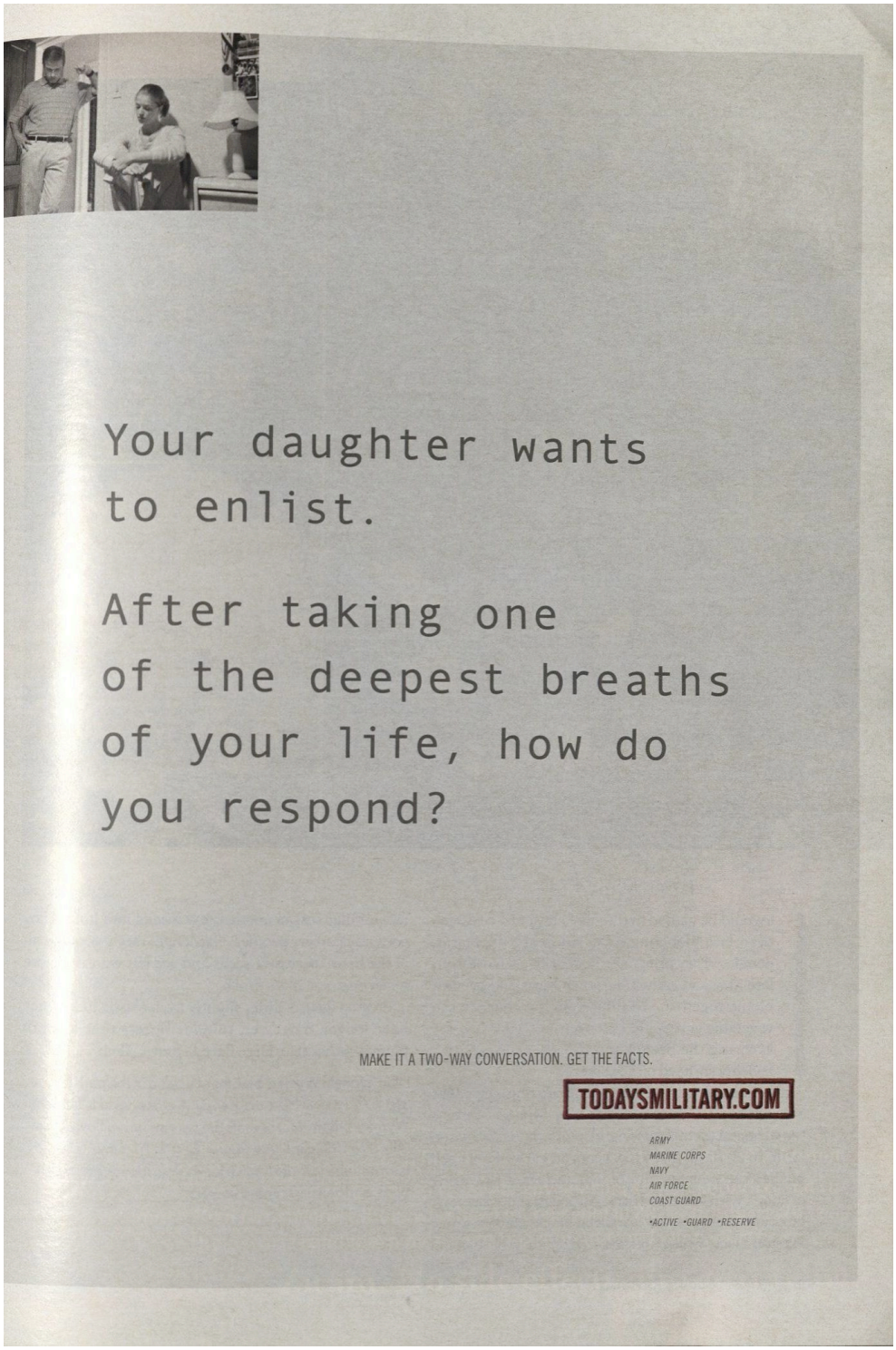

Figure 6: Today's Military Advertisement (White family), 2003-2012

On Instagram, we see similar "parental consent" narratives and "giving away" rituals. Figures 7 and 8 feature Instagram posts from the Coast Guard and the Air Force's official accounts. In Figure 7 (Coast Guard), three sisters are featured – one of which was given guest ownership of the Coast Guard's Instagram account for that week. In her final post, she thanks her sisters who are also in the Coast Guard for their support in her individual achievements in her service career. From her lack of stripes and adornments on her uniform, it seems that she is the youngest/least experienced daughter of parents who are not featured. Their implied ability to support the decision of three daughters joining the military is a powerful message sent to potential viewers of this Instagram account, which communicates that parents still own their daughters bodies. A daughter can join the military only when she can fully convince her parents/family to allow her to do so. It is even better if these parents hold high feelings of esteem and pride for the military as well, as Figure 8 further communicates. This post comes from the Air Force's Instagram account, and features a newly-graduated air[wo]man in the foreground flanked by her "proud" family. In full uniform, the young, white female is being out-beamed by the smiles of her family members.

In each of these figures, it is understood that the parents/families of these women are proud of their service accomplishments that are being marked by ceremonial military rituals. What is less clear upon first glance is how class and education may be also playing into these families' feelings of pride and acceptance. For instance, in Figure 7, all three sisters are pursuing officer commissions, as indicated by the rank insignia[5] displayed on their sleeves. This means they either have already completed their college education prior to joining military ranks, or they are in the process of doing so

[5] Rank insignia information for enlisted and officer positions in each branch can be found at http://www.defense.gov/about/insignias.

simultaneously (this is most likely the case of the female cadet on the far right dressed in Coast Guard blues). In contrast, the recently graduated female Air Force cadet pictured in Figure 8 has no visible insignia indicating her rank. However, the caption does indicate she is in San Antonio, which provides a key clue. San Antonio is home to Lackland Air Force Base, described as the Air Force's "only site for enlisted basic military training for all non-prior service Airmen of the regular Air Force, Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserve" (according to the official DOD website, Military.com). This means that this woman is an enlisted soldier who is not on an officer-commissioned track, meaning that she most likely does not have a college education.

This additional layer of reading into the semiotics of parental support can potentially point to different motivations for 'giving away' their daughters. In Figure 8, Coast Guard officership seems to be an established family tradition, perhaps instituted by parents, grandparents, or other family members. If this is the case, it may have been expected for this daughter to 'give herself away'. Nepotism may have molded this path for these women. Family influences may have also piqued these women's interest in the career path. Regardless of these women's ultimate motivations, it seems that family support was pre-existing. In contrast, when it comes to newly enlisted female soldiers, it is unclear how much female soldiers may have had to 'convince' their families about the merits of their decision to join the military. This distinction between officer versus enlisted commission pathways in recruiting materials featuring women soldiers adds an interesting layer of visual analysis, which may be of interest to future studies.

Figure 7: Implied parental support in a Coast Guard Instagram post featuring three daughters (sisters) who all joined the Coast Guard, 2014.

Figure 8: Family members of a newly graduated Air Force cadet beam with pride, 2013.

Figure 9 further enunciates the idea that the military is a cultural space in which females symbolically spread their 'wings' into a new stage of life, which several posts on Instagram depict by sharing images of official ceremonies. This example from the Air Force's account is the only one to feature an all-female graduation, which, combined with the fact that the Air Force had the highest number of posts prominently featuring women, may indicate that the Air Force culture is one of the least masculinized or more highly accepting of female soldiers. Regardless, given the aim of Today's Military of reminding parents that the military is a world worthy of handing over your daughter's life, the portrayal of women in a life-changing ceremony is noteworthy. Rather than marriage or college graduation, their completion of basic training is symbolic of their detachment from the previously sheltered lives.

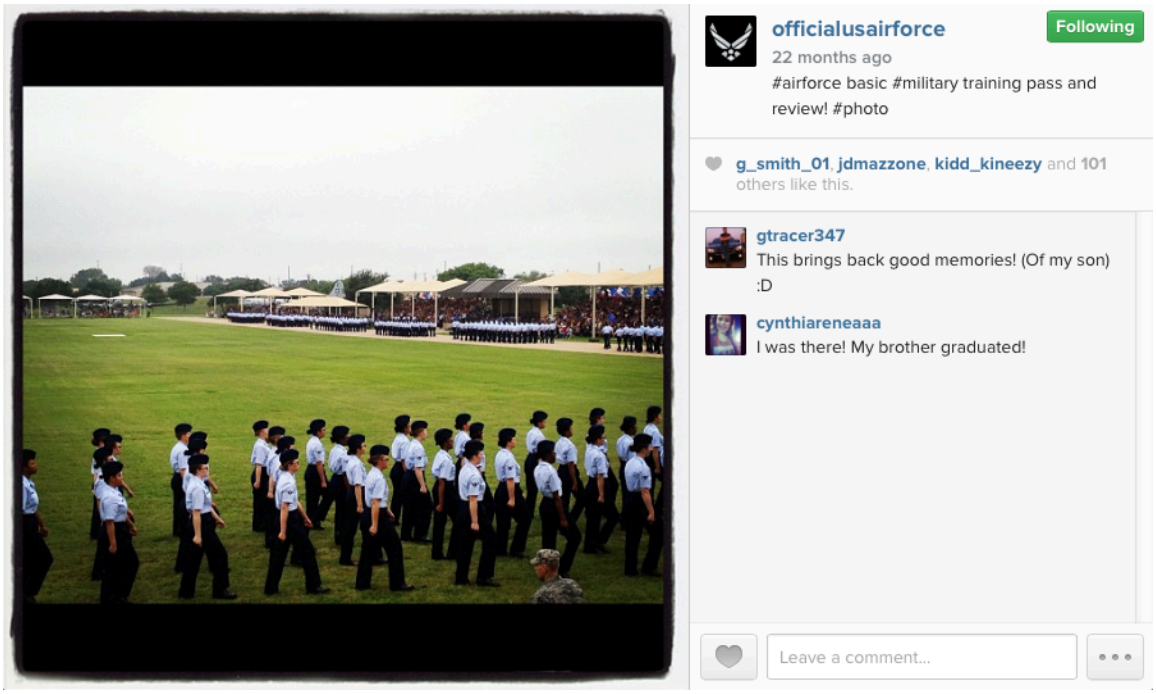

Figure 9: A group of female Air Force cadets march during their basic training graduation ceremony, 2012.

Theme 2: Reversing Female Domestication

Another theme that ran through both magazine advertisements and Instagram recruiting materials was the re-articulation that the military is a warrior culture, which by extension means that it is inherently masculine. Because of this, it is to be expected that female soldiers will be de-domesticated from the gender socialization of their upbringing. In the magazine ads for Today's Military, this was primarily communicated through the small images included in the campaign. The isolated and detached placement of these images evoke a "peeping Tom" aspect to the pictures, as if they were windows peering into the lives of these young women having serious conversations with their parents. Part of this eerie feeling comes from the personal and intimate settings of these images, such as the recruit's bedroom (Figure 6), the family kitchen (Figure 10), the living room couch (Figure 21), or a girl's shopping trip (Figure 22).

Placing these women within each of these settings sends a clear message: before the military, females are expected to do 'female' things – decorate their bedrooms and homes, cook with and for the family, and go shopping. The ads in this campaign subtly assert that these cultural practices associated with femininity will not be present in the military. Figures 11 through 15 (and Figure 26 in chapter 5) portray actual female soldiers in the Air Force, Marines, Navy, and Coast Guard all performing tasks that subvert the gendered expectations of females in society. One woman is shown crawling through the mud, clearly exerting herself physically. Several women are featured in control of large machinery, and one Marine is featured holding a large assault weapon. All of these images work together to construct the military as a space in which a reversal of domesticity is to be expected. Females will be placed in new spaces in which they will be given tasks and duties only young boys may have traditionally been exposed to during their childhood.

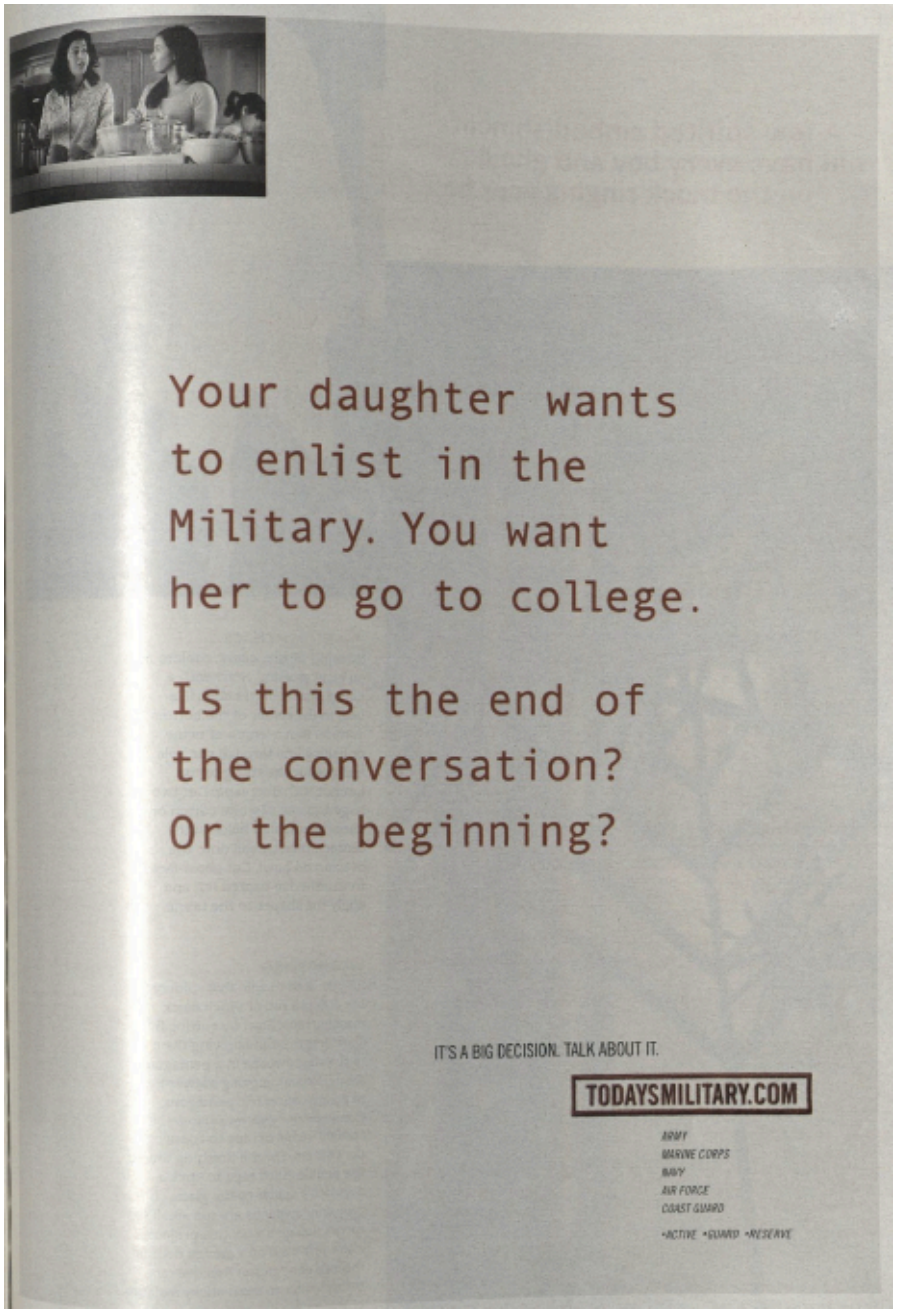

Figure 10: Today's Military magazine advertisement (Latina family) talking in kitchen, 2003-2012

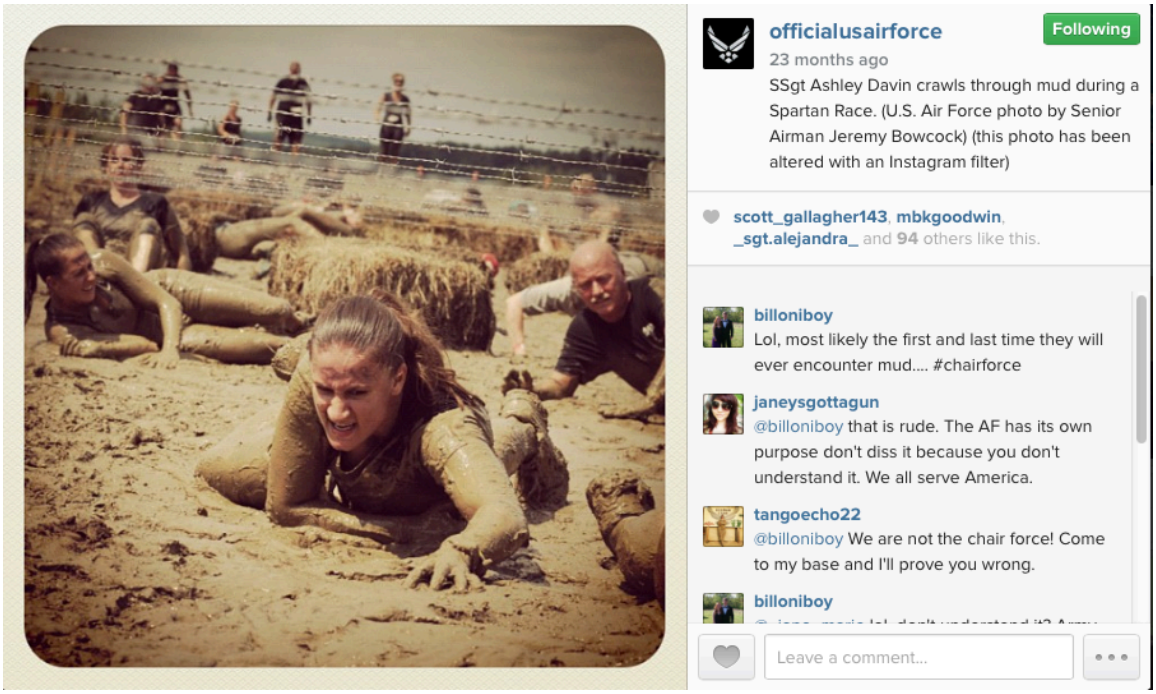

Figure 11: Female Air Force soldier crawls through the mud during a military-sponsored race. (2012)

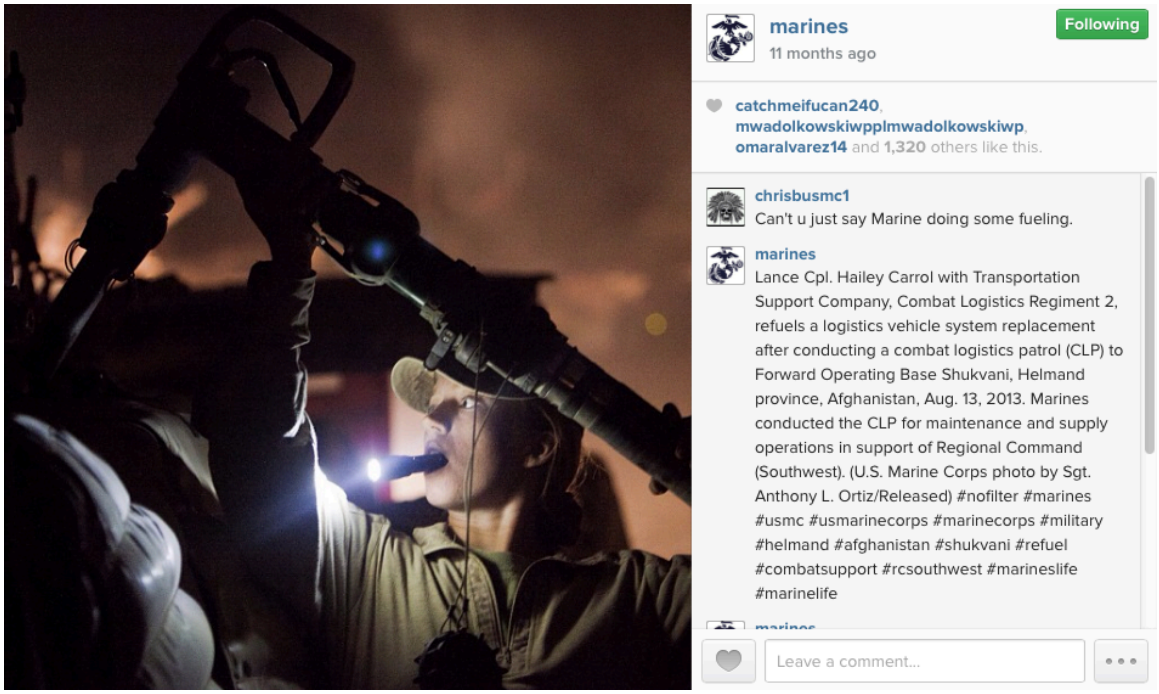

Figure 12: A female Marine fuels a vehicle at night. (2013)

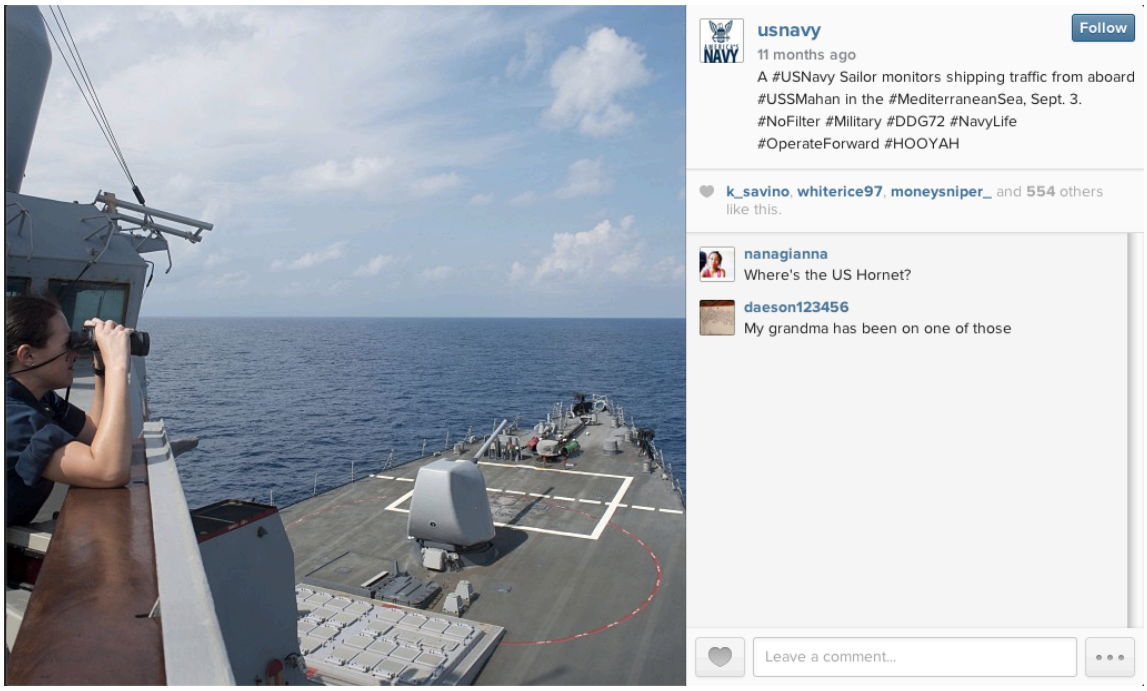

Figure 13: A female Navy sailor monitors shipping traffic in the Mediterranean Sea. (2013)

Figure 14: A belly-down female Marine holding a combat weapon during a training exercise. (2013)

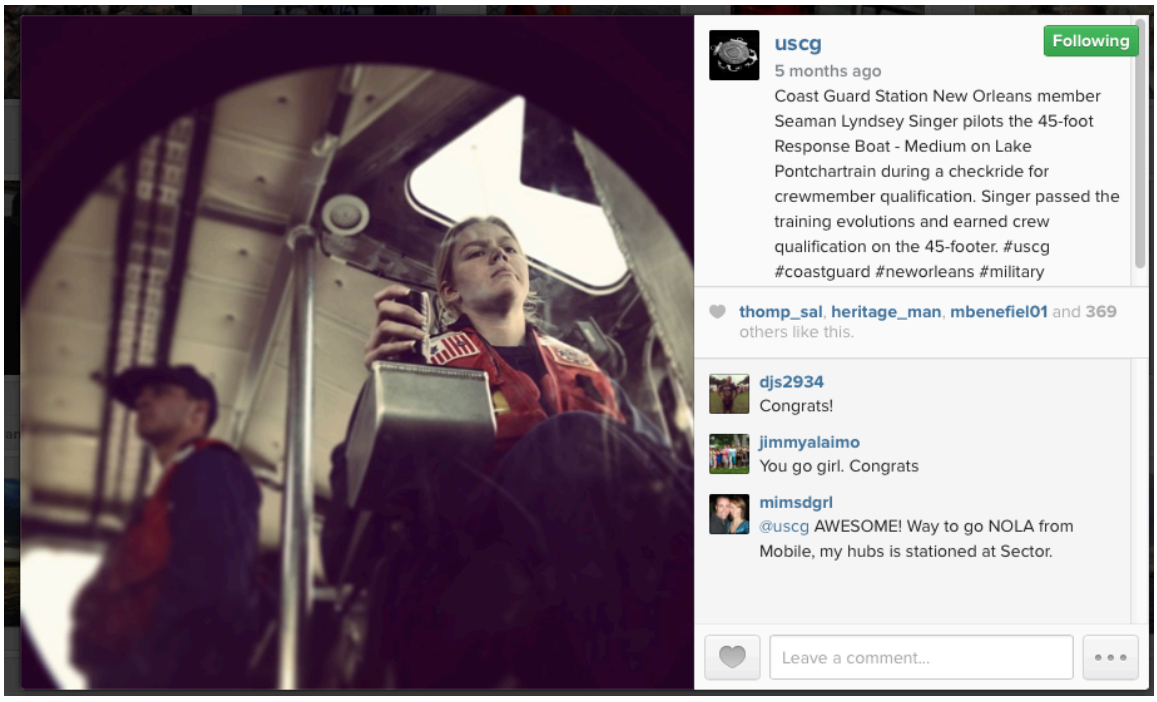

Figure 15: A female Coast Guard member pilots a boat as part of a training assessment. (2014)

One final example of note regarding the reversal of domestication theme is found in Figure 16, which is another early full-color Today's Military advertisement. In this more rarely-found ad, a real Air Force veteran, Sandra Sessoms-Penny, is the main subject being profiled. Designed to promote the educational and occupational benefits of military service, this tangential campaign of Today's Military references the skills veterans acquired in service which transferred to their post-service careers. For Sessoms-Penny, who is now an assistant principal, "DETERMINATION" was the overarching quality she acquired in the military, which now allows her to not "give up" and avoid getting hit with a "French fry at lunch". Sessoms-Penny is depicted standing behind a podium on a stage where middle-schooled-aged looking children are seated. She is raising her right arm, which is surrounded by what looks like an x-ray picture frame, allowing us to see a fragment of her previous self in her military uniform. In her framed

right hand, she holds a wrench, which alludes to her military title as engineer. In the background of this frame (again, reminiscent of the previous looking-in-a-window strategy) we see Air Force planes, implying that during her service, Sessoms-Penny was responsible for the maintenance of these aircraft.

The portrayal and contrasting of Sessoms-Penny's post-service career and military life underline the military's assertion that female soldiers will be removed from the traditional spheres of female life the real world constricts them to. This communicates the military as an empowering space for women who enlist compared to the 'real world' in which females are associated with home spaces, mall/shopping spaces, and careers in education. Sessoms-Penny's domestic *reverting* versus *reversing* when re-entering the civilian world reinforces the notion that the military is a space where femininity is eradicated to varying degrees, dependent on factors such as branch affiliation and/or soldier occupation.

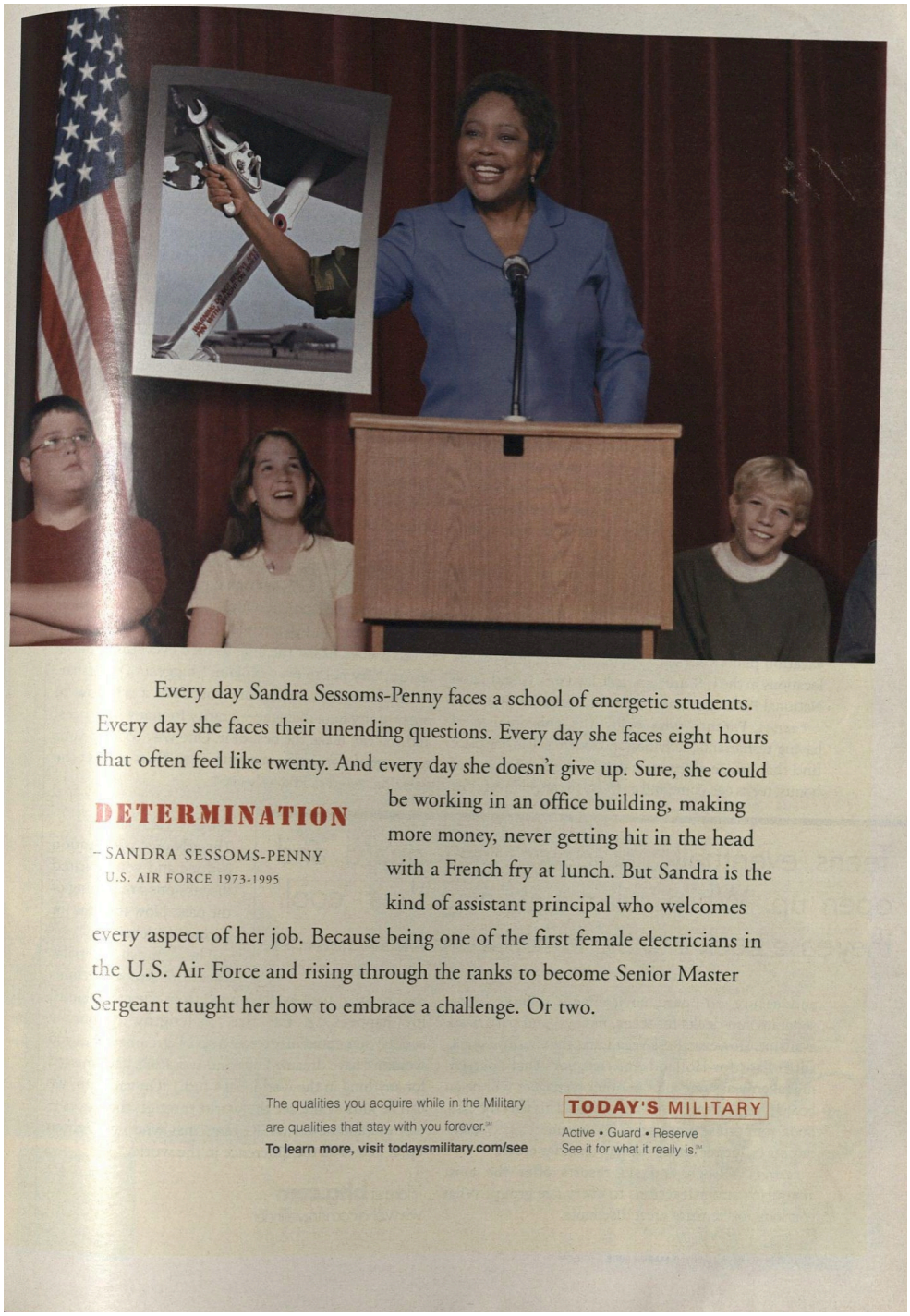

Figure 16: Sandra Sessoms-Penny, Air Force veteran, is featured in her post-service life as an educator. (2005)

Theme 3: Utilization of Feminine Sociability – Females as Public Relations Tools

The final theme that emerged in the magazine and online recruiting materials examined was the idea that even though the military works to eradicate femininity, women's 'natural' abilities/talents to socialize and look pretty will still be utilized by the military. The first example of this is shown in Figure 17, another early Today's Military ad featuring narratives of veterans' post-service lives. In this ad, Donna Renae, a Navy veteran, is shown in a seated, smiling pose in a radio station, looking straight at the camera. Her left shoulder is framed by the x-ray window, and within it we can see Renae's uniformed arm in the foreground and a large Naval vessel in the background. In the text, Renae is described to have acquired "DILIGENCE" while in the military, particularly at the Department of Defense's school of journalism. While receiving her military education, she also "developed the confidence to pursue that passion" leading to her eventual two Edward R. Murrow awards for broadcast journalism. Here, we are given a message which says that Renae held these talents for broadcasting and public relations, but they may have not necessarily been cultivated had it not been for the military. Renae may not have even understood what it meant to pursue a passion or to experience confidence in the workspace. The military's recognition that she was a natural socializer put her on the path to professional communication.

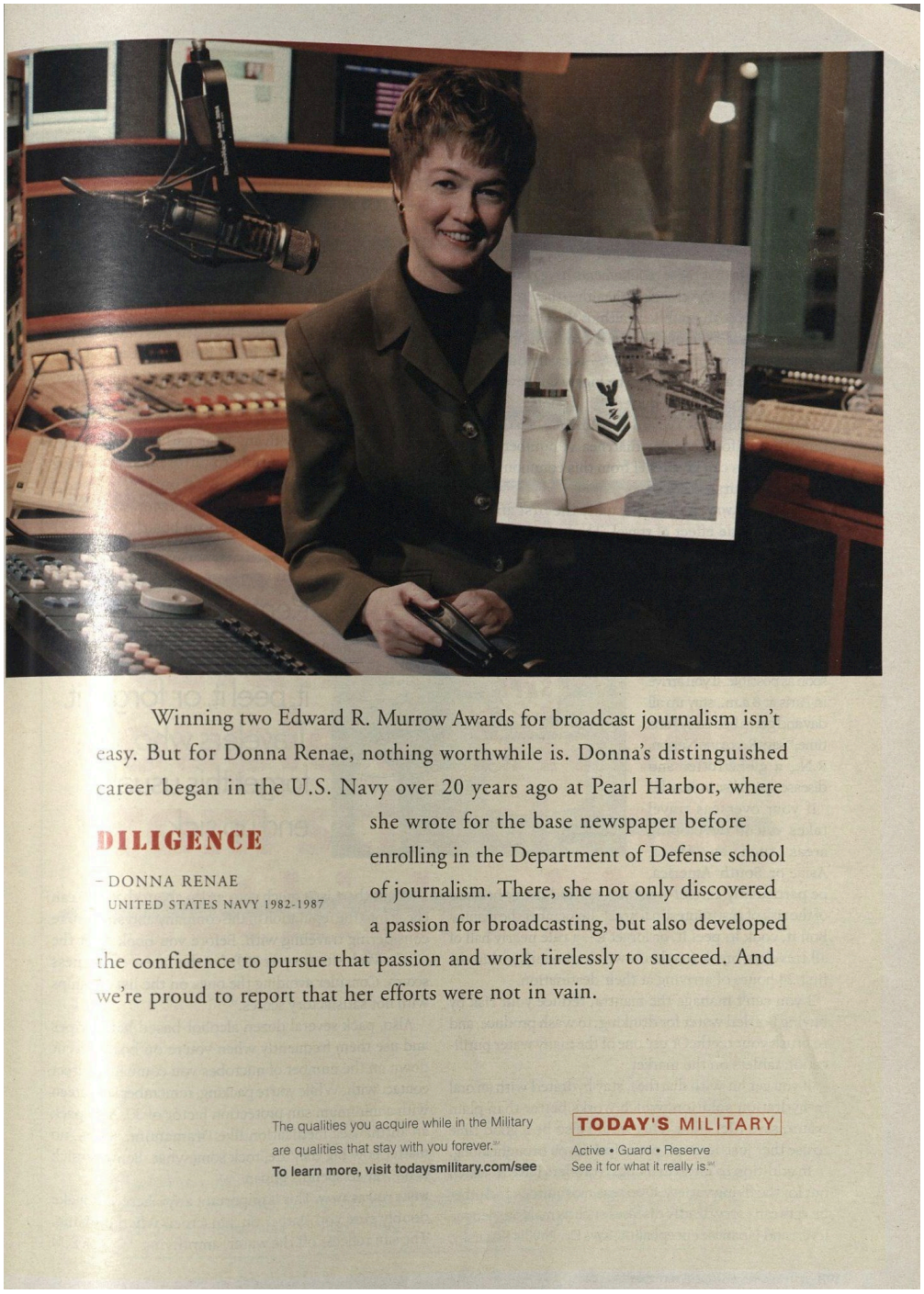

Figure 17: Donna Renae, a Navy veteran, sitting in a radio station studio. The text reveals the Navy's role in helping her find her "passion" for broadcasting and journalism. (2005)

On Instagram (particularly on the Air Force account), female soldiers are often used to market and do promotions for their military branches. Figure 18 shows a picture of a female Air Force member being filmed for an Air Force commercial. Figure 19 shows a female member of the Coast Guard chosen to take control of their Instagram account for the week. Figure 20 is a historic recruitment ad targeting females for Navy enlistment. All of these posts have one underlying message: the essential femininity of female soldiers makes them perfect for military marketing. This 'femininity' is co-opted by the military, perhaps in efforts to make the military appear more accepting of females in service while also using their faces and bodies for military public relations.

Figure 18: An Air Force commercial features a female service member spokesperson. (2012)

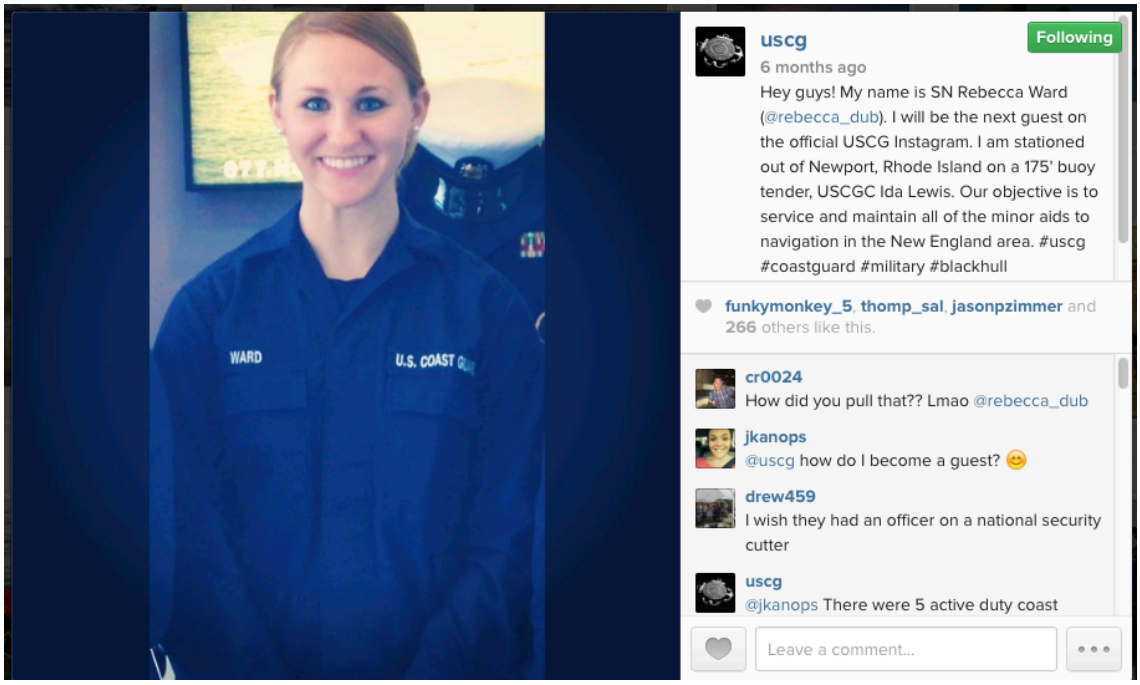

Figure 19: The Coast Guard nominates a female member to control its Instagram account for a week. (2014)

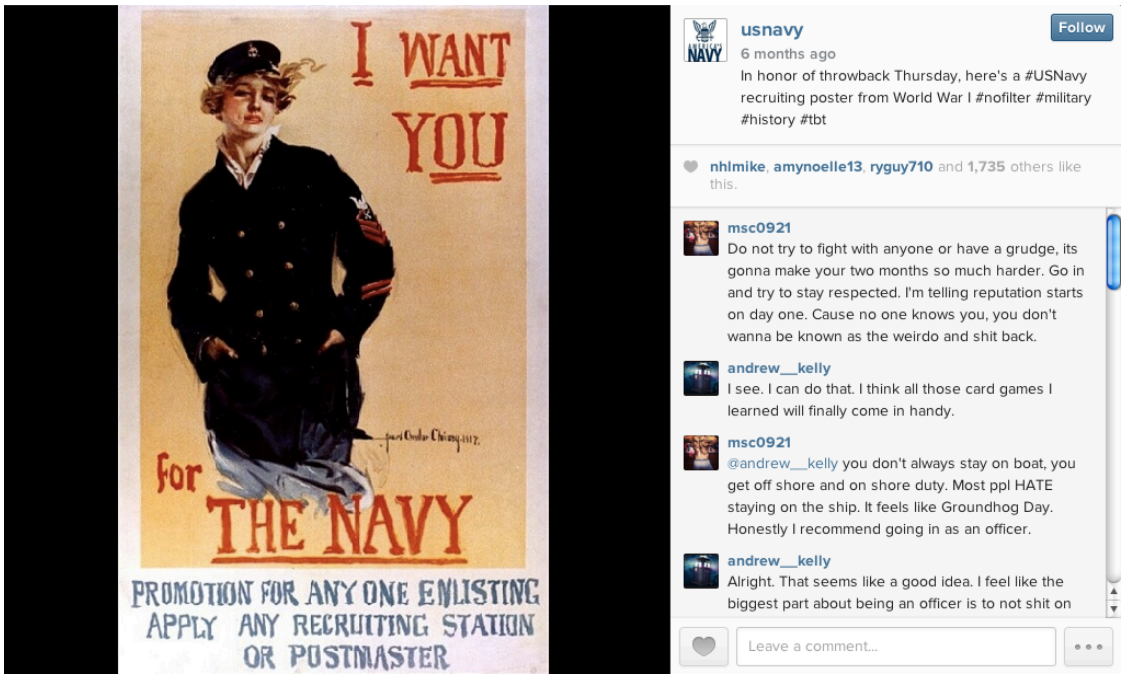

Figure 20: The Navy pulls a recruiting poster featuring a female sailor from its archives. (2014)

Daughters, Domesticators, and Talkers: Concluding Thoughts on the Positioning of Female Soldiers for Female Recruits

It is important to remember that the representations discussed in this chapter are ultimately tools used to recruit future female soldiers. The ways female soldier life is presented to recruits may reveal gendered ideologies of military culture. After examining and analyzing both print and online recruiting materials found on the official military Instagram accounts, female soldiers were depicted as daughters at the mercy of their parents, women who would be relegated to domestic spheres if they did not join the military, and useful marketing tools for the military's continual public relations campaigns.

With the exception of the Rosemary ad discussed in the introduction, the print ads featured in this chapter ran in all three magazines, suggesting that the military may have approached this campaign in a way that empowers both female recruits, and other key 'influencers' such as parents, family, and friends. By positioning parents as those with a lack of knowledge about what it is like for women in the military, they give power to the young women thinking about enlisting by boosting their ego and emerging sense of adult independence. Simultaneously, they reinforce traditional ideas about parenting – that what parents say is the rule of law, that parental expectations matter, and that the military respects these parental decisions. Again, this may be indicative of the military's desire to reify the 'All-American' family trope, which most likely benefits their own recruitment endeavors.

The online advertisements also featured parents and families in adoration of their military daughters and sisters, but interestingly never featured a female soldier as a mother herself. This brings up an interesting implication in the broader discourse of young women: that they are controlled and owned by others until they have a family of

their own. Even though the military claims to equip them with new skills and opportunities not otherwise available to women in the civilian world, we must remember the ways in which the military also makes no secret that the price paid for these opportunities is the literal sacrifice of one's body. In the masculine subculture of the military, the female body becomes both subjugated during rituals of military culture and utilized when the military sees opportunities for interest convergence.

PART II. AUDIENCE INTERACTIVITY AND THE CO-CONSTRUCTION OF FEMALE RECRUITMENT NARRATIVES FROM MAGAZINES TO INSTAGRAM

Even before the rise of social media, social networks were being constructed on the internet in various ways and the military was incorporating their rising popularity into recruiting advertisements. Figure 21 is one example of this. Another tangential extension of Today's Military (which intended to advertise the todaysmilitary.com forum which allowed users to communicate thoughts, concerns, and experiences of the military with one another), this particular advertisement promotes the use of the Navyformoms.com, a website in which Navy mothers can create accounts to network and communicate with other Navy mothers. The ad shows Sherry, an African American mother seated on a couch in what appears to be a middle- to upper-middle classed home, also indicated by her classed wardrobe and jewelry. The text describes how her daughter Lauren – who was accepted into several prestigious universities – but *wanted* to go to the U.S. Naval Academy to "truly test herself". Becoming nervous, Sherry turned to Navyformoms.com for information relating to what her daughter would experience at the Academy. While this ad appears to be solely focused on Naval mothers as an audience, its message is deeper: it more largely communicates the notion that there are a lot of widely-held misconceptions about the military in general. Thus, it encourages the

audience to explore and research for themselves to construct their own ideas about the military – on the military's own social network, of course.

Figure 21: Navyformoms.com advertisement (an extension of the Today's Military campaign) encouraging mothers to join its online forum to discuss aspects military life. (2009)

Another print ad example of this theme is from the somber tri-colored ads of the Today's Military campaign, featuring an African American mother and daughter (Figure 22) out shopping with several bags of purchased goods in hand. The daughter is facing her mother, who looks like she is responding to something the daughter said or asked. The text of the ad reads: *It's important to have more information before you say "no." It's even more important to have that information before you say "yes."* In the bottom right hand-corner, additional subtext reads *IT'S A BIG DECISION. TALK ABOUT IT. TODAYSMILITARY.COM*. This recruiting advertisement wishes to make the parental audience feel good about the military, similar to the satisfaction felt when you purchase an expensive item knowing that it will live up to its price tag. Again, this campaign aims to get parents and audiences to log on to the military's website to gather information about enlisted or reserve careers, and giving them opportunities to socialize with other members. It is clear that the military marketers behind these campaigns understood, to some degree, the desire of audiences to take control of their information-gathering and share that information with others in similar social networks or life situations.

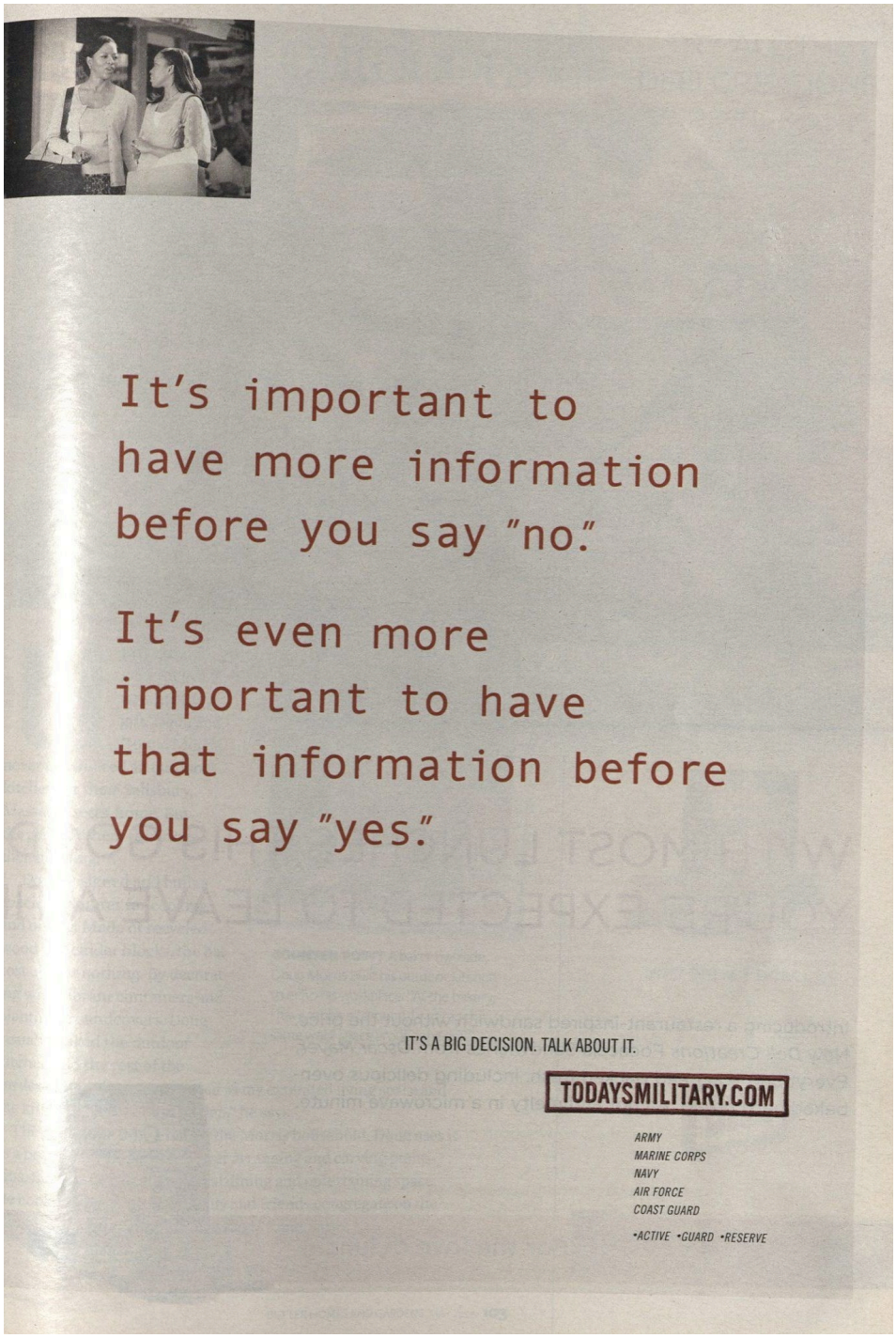

Figure 22: Today's Military advertisement featuring African American mother and daughter imploring parents to "have more information" when discussing enlistment with their daughters, 2003-2012.

Of course, the eventual arrival of social media has completely changed the ways audiences interact with military recruiting materials. In Figures 23, 24, and 25, several examples of user interactivity and audience co-construction of cultural messages are provided. Figure 23 from the Coast Guard's Instagram depicts an emotional, sobbing family member embracing a female cadet at her graduation ceremony. Nearly 300 users "liked" the photo, and two commenters added to the caption provided by the Coast Guard account. One commenter remarked on the memorability of this moment, and the other recalled having the same "unforgettable feeling" at her son's graduation. Here, we see real examples of audiences interacting with the recruiting materials being put out for public consumption to build communities of support, and in the process, co-constructing/reifying the narratives being written by official military outlets.

Figure 23: Commenters "like" and reminisce on post about Coast Guard graduation, 2014

Figure 24 is taken from the Air Force Instagram account. It shows three seated women, one in uniform, and the other two in civilian clothing manning laptops. The caption reads, *Here's today's tweet chat team. We had a discussion with our followers about EPRs on @usairforce. #afchat #airforce*. Here we see examples of interactive "@" and hashtag features being utilized by the Air Force's marketing team. Although this virtual live-chat conversation took place on Twitter, Instagram is used to visually show who is 'behind the keyboard'. Users who participate in this conversation are directed to use the hashtags #afchat and #airforce in order to interact with other user responses, questions, and comments. Again, female soldiers (and women) are used for public relations purposes, appearing to be professional social media mavens.

Figure 24: The Air Force's "tweet chat team" is pictured during a live chat session with users, 2012.

The final example of user interactivity an audience participation in the co-construction of narratives regarding female soldier representation comes from Figure 25, a photo taken from the Marines Instagram account. In this post, Pfc. Cristina Fuentes Montenegro is described as being one of only three female Marines to be the first-ever women to graduate infantry training. A new option for women after the lifting of the combat ban in 2013, many of the 155 commenters are not yet adjusted to this change and voice their opinions in the comment section. Here, audiences use the commenting feature to discuss the merits, obstacles, and ideologies of warriorhood associated with these new representations of female soldiers in combat roles. One, shown in the picture, says that having female soldiers in combat is too risky because if she was placed in a dangerous situation, her male comrades would be compelled to put themselves in a dangerous situation in order to save them. Another who identifies as an 'infantryman' adds (spelling and grammar mistakes included):

> do you know how infantryman take showers? Naked, with there buddy on a humvee pouring water from a 5 gallon drum on them. Do you think a girl can be in that environment? Okay lets try another one. Where do guys pee when on a hump? Where ever the fuck they want to. Do you think a girl can be in that kind of environment? It goes on and on. Im sure there are women out there that can do it, but really mixing genders will not be good. Coming from an infantryman. (@matt__kolb)[6]

The ways audiences are interacting with these official representations of female soldiers indicate that, particularly in the Marines and in other military combat roles, women are still not expected to perform or hold the most dangerous occupations.

[6] The Instagram user profile for @matt__kolb is private, but his user description is visible. It gives his first and last name and describes himself as "19. Army Infantry."

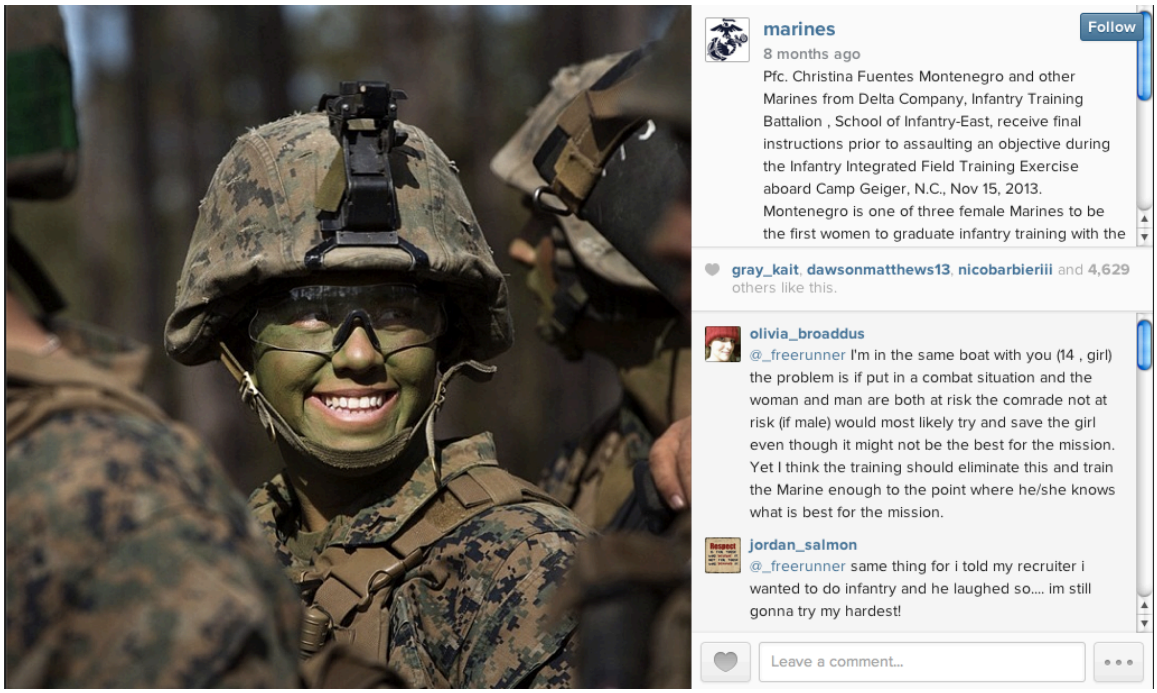

Figure 25: A smiling female Marine is featured as one of the first women to graduate from infantry training, a newly-opened field for women. Commenters debate allowing women to serve in combat positions, 2013.

Chapter 5: *Why Female Soldier Representation Matters for All Women: Implications for Critical Media Literacy and Fourth-Wave Feminism*

Military recruitment materials that represent female soldiers are unique sources of data for cultural studies scholars interested in exploring narratives related to feminist theory, militarism, and/or media studies. As previous research has suggested, representations of female soldiers provide unique lenses for examining the military's reliance on gender dichotomy (Enloe, 1990, 1994b, 2000; Steihm, 1982; Chodorow, 1974), discursive narratives which masculinize the warrior while feminizing the homeland (Pankov, Mihelj, & Bajt, 2011; Cohler, 2006), and gendered archetypes of the soldier indicated by masculine semiotics of war, including male bodies (Connell, 1990; Carruthers, 2008), positions of rank and privilege (Howard & Prividera, 2006; Ross & Carter, 2011; Giroux, 2004), guns (Pomerance & Sakeris, 2000), and uniforms (Adie, 2003; Wheelwright, 1989). These gendered narratives, archetypes, and accompanying rhetoric can be visibly identified in representations of female soldiers.

This study has attempted to show how post-9/11 representations of female soldiers in official military recruiting materials can provide insight into the gendered cultural narratives around women, the military, and civilian society. It has also examined how audience interactivity was incorporated into the production, consumption, and distribution of these recruiting materials during the time period from 2001-2014, in which youth print media consumption patterns shifted heavily from magazines to the online world – particularly social media. Using recruitment ads found in popular women's magazines and on the official Instagram accounts of the U.S. military, three research questions were addressed: 1) *What visual and/or textual codes found in female soldier representations are used to construct gendered cultural meanings around women in the military in print and online military recruitment materials?*; 2) *How do print and online*

recruiting materials encourage audiences to co-construct, produce, and distribute these gendered cultural meanings surrounding women in the military?; and *3) What is the significance of audience interactivity in female soldier representations, particularly during the GWOT era?*

Using cultural coding (Luke, 2003) and Kellner's guidelines (2015, 2013) for cultural studies analysis of modern mass media, three themes emerged from the exploration of the first research question: 1) *the cultural trope/ritual of "giving away/exchanging of women",* 2) *reversing female domestication, and* 3) *female soldiers as public relations tools*. All three of these themes associate female soldiers with negative cultural tropes of essentialized 'femininity' (Baumgardner & Richards, 2004; Connell, 1987; Chodorow, 1974; Freidan, 1963). Throughout the time period analyzed, audiences were encouraged to interactively engage with the constructions and representations of female soldiers by directing them to online web forums, and later through the usage of features such as direct user messaging, hashtagging, liking, and commenting. This is a significant development for all media studies interested in the how contemporary media/advertising strategies capitalize on the power of audiences to promote or value marketing materials (see Croteau & Hoynes, 2007).

The examination of post-9/11 recruiting materials has provided important implications about contemporary expressions of femininity and soldierhood in an age of military involvement, changing media, and rising internet usage. By reflecting on the circulated understandings about women in the military, this chapter will be used to discuss some of these implications in relation to parents, educators, and students.

CONCLUSIONS

Giving Away Women: Consent, Control, and Female Agency

One underlying narrative found within this theme of 'giving away' women is the narrative of consent and control. Women who join the military are seen as vulnerable in and outside of the force; thus, if a woman is contemplating joining the service, it is implied that her family must consent to 'give her away'. While future female recruits clearly have agency in this decision, this type of attitude fails to acknowledge their agency and in some ways reifies the 'emotional woman' trope (Wollstonecraft, 1792/2009; Krolokke & Sorenson, 2005) that renders women as incapable of making 'rational' decisions (de Beauvoir, 1949/1989; Kaplan, 1991). Further, knowing that the military is dependent on women soldiers, it is interesting that they continue to infantilize females as being daughters or sisters rather than independent individuals who decided to enlist on their own. Of course, this may also be part of the military's desire to reify the archetype of the 'All-American' family, who is patriotic and supportive of the U.S. military (May, 2008).

Regardless, once the woman does enlist and become a soldier, it is interesting how the military then uses marketing tools to underscore the idea/reality that control of these women has been passed from families to the military itself. Uniforms, regalia, marches, and pan-opticon (as seen in the camouflaged onlooking supervisor in the bottom right corner of Figure 9) are incorporated into these materials to remind audiences that enlisting eventually means you submit your free will to the military. Natural questions arise in relation to the women who do make this decision – can they be considered members of third or fourth wave feminist movements if they resign their agency, bodies, abilities to protest or petition, etc., to military control? Or, do these representations overstate the forsaking of female agency in an attempt to control their bodies during

service, when females actually may have more freedom than portrayed? These questions undoubtedly require further qualitative study. In any case, it is important to recognize that these contemporary recruiting materials continue to represent women as controlled objects (Newsom, et. al., 2011) rather than agentic subjects.

The Military is not Domestic, but Women Are

The advertisements discussed relating to the 'reversing domesticity' theme show how the military conceptualizes women as being inherently domestic (Baxandall & Gordon, 2005; Friedan, 1963), particularly in the print advertisements (Alexander, 1999). Outside of the military, women occupy feminized spaces (Tuchman, 1978) such as schools, kitchens, living rooms, and malls. Despite the fact that female soldiers – like female civilians – surely have to learn, eat, sit, and shop, these spaces are rarely portrayed in recruiting materials. This communicates a couple of gendered messages. First, as previously noted, it underlines the idea that the military is masculinized (Brown, 2012; Young, 2003; Tasker, 2002; Howard & Prividera, 2006; Enloe, 1994; Connell, 1990; Steihm, 1982); thus, when females join the military, they will have to 'lose' their domestic 'habits' (Johnson & Lloyd, 2004; D'Amico & Weinstein, 1999; Friedan, 1963) or ways of being (and when they leave, they can return to them). Second, it reifies an essentialized, homogenous femininity (de Beauvoir 1949/1989) while simultaneously upholding the essentialized masculinity associated with being a soldier (Steihm, 1996; Shields, 1988; Connell, 1990). This works to reinforce the idea that women will 'gain' valuable skills and experiences in the military that would have been cut off to them in the civilian world.

And perhaps there is an important truth to these messages. Things such as operating large/heavy machinery, owning or firing a weapon, and/or pursuing STEM

careers are all experiences that *are* typically male-dominated in the civilian world (Blickenstaff, 2005; Reskin & Bielby, 1993). Given this, it is important to consider how the military may be using these representations to speak to its female audiences about their disempowerment in the 'real' world. In some ways, this may represent the military's awareness of fourth-wave feminism's technology-generated collectivity (Cochrane, 2013; Baumgardner, 2011): by displaying images of real women performing interesting duties and tasks and publishing them online, others may see that and wish to participate as well.

Female Voice and Military [Male] Authority

The idea that women love to gab and gossip (Currie, 1999) is a long-standing cultural trope (Bell, 2013; Walters, 1995) found in popular culture, in television shows such as *Gossip Girl, The View, Girls,* and *Sex and the City,* and movies such as *Mean Girls* and *Clueless*. This characterization essentially diminishes the knowledge and power of the female voice. By typifying women as chatterboxes – and in contrast, men as 'uninterested' in such socialization – the female voice is reduced to 'trivial' subject matter (Gill, 2007; Krolokke & Sorenson, 2005; Radway, 1991). The fact that at least 2 branches of the military (Air Force and Coast Guard) continually used female soldiers as public relations figureheads only reifies this notion. Additionally, women's continual positioning as 'socializers' removes power when women band together for collective issues. It thus makes it easier to characterize these women as complainers, whiners, or bitches rather than subjective resistors.

The usage and positioning of female soldiers as military marketers also subtly reinforces the patriarchal structure of power within the military (Howard & Prividera, 2004; Young 2003). Essentially, these representations suggest that it will be female

soldiers, not males, who will perform these clean, safe, and social duties. Presumably, these female soldiers have other occupational duties to perform as well. Are these women compensated for the extra tasks? While the military does holistically represent women as promoters (as the other depictions in this chapter confirm), this theme found in several of the representations presented here suggest the military believes women are inherently talented when it comes to marketing and public relations. If this is the case, are women pipelined into other fields as well?

Audience Interactivity: Reading Female Military Recruitment Materials

As the early print Today's Military advertisements show, the military has long utilized the impetus of its audiences to corral them directly to its own sources of 'official' information. By providing audiences with agency to explore 'on their own', these recruiting materials created during the GWOT era challenge audiences to 'see for themselves' what the military is all about. As social media has become increasingly popular (Bennett, 2013a, 2013b), the military has begun to use it as marketing platforms as well (McManus, 2011; Yeung & Gifford, 2010). The fact/reality that audiences can participate in the meaning-making of female soldier representation is important because it visibly reveals how audiences have always participated advertising materials (Croteau & Hoynes, 2007), making it clear that audiences are not blank slates who wholly consume the messages being marketed towards them (Hall, 1997). They may agree, disagree, critique, or add to what they see – and social media makes this possible on an immediate, larger-than-ever scale (Pew Research Center, 2013). The blurring of boundaries between media producer and audiences, allowed by the user capabilities of the internet and social media, have caused some scholars to suggest the usage of new terms such as "produser" and "prosumer" (Bruns, 2008) to describe this hybridization.

The depictions of female soldiers on Instagram accounts of the military frequently have much-higher-than-average "likes" and "comments" in contrast to similar photos depicting male soldiers or those portraying military 'scenes' (such as planes, boats, landscapes, training exercises, etc.; those with similar or higher numbers of likes included September 11th tribute posts or other 'sentimental' posts such as men shown speaking to Afghan children), indicating that audiences are eager to add to the cultural meaning of female soldierhood. It also confirms what this study suggests, which is that there are increased political stakes associated with female soldiers' representations. This high level of interactivity also brings up more questions relating to pleasure, resistance, and identity. Several media scholars have explored the concept of pleasure as an important audience concept (Walters, 1995; Radway, 1991; Ang, 1985). To what extent can the audience interactivity on web forums or on social media platforms such as Instagram be read as activities of pleasure versus activities of resistance? Additionally, to what extent do audience identities and positionalities influence whether one is engaging in pleasure or resistance activities? Does this and/or should this change the ways in which we read these interactions?

The internet has brought about a open and participatory culture of sharing and disclosing. Users of social media often post personally revealing information online, and this is not simply limited to identifying information. Further, users are sharing what makes them happy, sad, angry, or otherwise emotional, what they like and dislike, what they are currently doing (their 'status'), and more. Madden & Smith (2010) found that millenials or "digital natives" share information online more openly and comfortably. This is important to keep in mind particularly when examining marketing materials constructed for young audiences, such as military recruiting materials. As media

producers acquire more sophisticated data on their audiences, it remains to be seen how that data may be used to personalize tailored recruiting materials for specific individuals.

As Croteau & Hoynes (2007) note, when studying online media audiences, it is important to remember that going online is "an inherently social activity that is shared among a group of friends" (p. 276). What does this mean when online recruiting materials representing female soldiers are put in conversation with the emerging fourth-wave feminist movement? Can the spaces created by commenters and hashtags be considered grounds for resistance? Judging by several recent social movements – such as the Arab Spring of 2010, or the aftermath of a 2014 police shooting of unarmed black teenager Mike Brown in Ferguson, Missouri – the answer is yes. In these events, interactive features found on social media platforms created spaces for active audiences to participate in resistance movements. Though female soldier representation is much different from standing firm against government overreach, the ways in which audiences can circulate oppositional messages directly to those in power is a potent notion.

IMPLICATIONS

The Military Savior Complex

One glaring omission in the overwhelming majority of military recruitment materials is the lack of focus on the hyper-violent aspect of the military, and its role as the enforcer versus diplomat in the resolution of political problems. Instead, the military presents itself as an all-around savior – for women and the world (Pankov, Mihelj, &Bajt, 2011). This self-constructed fantasy that the military 'saves' everyone is certainly a misrepresentation as numerous studies (Craig and Foster, 2012; Wallace, Sheehan, & Young-Xu, 2009; Street, Vogt, & Dutra, 2009) have cited the plethora of negative mental health and other medical conditions associated with military service. This reality is

actively hidden, and in its place, the military assures audiences that it will take care of everything, it will make you a better person, and you will be proud of your connection to the military.

As these representations suggest, the military makes a concerted effort to drive this message home to one group in particular – parents. Here, it is important to think about *which* parents the military may be speaking to. Are they reaching out to low-income parents who may not have the funds to send their daughter to college? Given that most enlisted soldiers come from low-income homes (Lutz, 2008), how does this relate to the fact that all of the families represented by the military typically appear to be middle class? Is the military also claiming that a daughter's enlistment will lead to increased financial security for the entire family? Given the military's promise of educational benefits and job training and the lack of affordable college financing options in the civilian world, can it actually in some ways, be seen as a savior for these families and individuals? These tangible realities for potential recruits are important to keep in mind when reading these recruiting materials. What is the military offering to these audiences? What is the cost? How is this communicated? How is the military constructing itself as an equal versus an alternative to a college path or civilian career?

Finally, these representations examined in this study frequently show how the military connects itself to a pleasant conceptualization of the American home and the family (May, 2008; Coontz, 1992). In fact, an official memo commenting on the Today's Military campaign explains how its underlying strategy was influenced by how parents and recruits think that, "most people are going to serve in the war. They don't know about the unique jobs that we offer" (Quigley, 2005). Knowledge is suggested as a replacement for fear, uncertainty, or disapproval to families who may be standing in the way of a female recruit. Yet, some knowledge is deliberately kept from families. For example: it

has been thirteen years since the attacks on September 11th occurred and the U.S. military is still engaged in anti-terror efforts in the Middle East, among other international locations. The lack of serious media and journalistic attention to these military efforts often mask this reality, which gives the military significant freedom to render itself as a trustworthy member of the proverbial American 'family' (Coontz, 1992).

Critical Media Literacy, Gender, Schools, and the Military

One year during my teaching career, my classroom was used during an elective time period when I was not teaching for a 9-week class focused on science fiction film. The teacher did an excellent job deconstructing thematic narratives of the sci-fi genre, but almost never touched upon issues of gender present in the films they viewed. As the class rotated out and new classes filled the seats, I saw another evident pattern: the classes were heavily dominated with male students, and female students were generally very quiet and did not actively participate in classroom conversations, despite the fact that sci-fi films tend to have relatively empowering portrayals of female characters. After what I thought were several successful conversations in which I encouraged the instructor to explore gender representation in sci-fi, it was rarely (if ever) addressed in class.

These events sparked my curiosity in gender representation and critical media literacy in schools. School curricula generally lack critical media consciousness, particularly with regards to gender (Iyer & Luke, 2011). At the same time, recruiters have more access than ever to young people in schools as a result of a clause written into the infamous No Child Left Behind (NCLB) of 2001 (Ayers, 2006). Given a lack of critical media consciousness and the military's predatory bottom line (to recruit soldiers), youth are vulnerable and at risk. Because female students are traditionally silenced and typically unaware of ideologies of femininity/masculinity that construct their ontological

and epistemological realities, they may be more susceptible to devious and veiled recruiting strategies targeting these gendered vulnerabilities. Incorporating critical media literacy education can help lead female (and male) students to "reflect critically on issues of social justice and to develop their own standpoint on gender inequities, identities and relations" (Iyer & Luke, 2011, p. 444).

Schools should be responsible for ensuring the development of gendered critical consciousness among all students. Or, as Kellner & Share (2007) put it: "critical media literacy is not an option." Because teenagers consume more media than ever before, there is little argument against ensuring critical media literacy in schools. With media becoming more complex, interactive, and intermedial, it is important that young people 'produsing' and 'prosuming' online know the boundaries between fantasy and reality. While recruitment materials certainly do not make decisions for young female recruits, young women must be aware of political and cultural processes involved in the formulation of the messages directed at them.

At the time being, schools which do incorporate critical media literacy are few and far between – meaning that on some level, they play a significant role in the students' decisions to join the military based on their engagement with 'real life' and online recruiting materials. This pro-regime hegemony is connected to the rising neoliberal wave of educational policy (Giroux, 2004) which disempowers teachers, particularly when it comes to curricular decision-making. Work done to incorporate critical media literacy curriculum into schools must be done with this in mind. This study's commentary on the power of social media and audience interactivity in producing and distributing cultural messages showcases how the internet can be used to effect change – and perhaps can be a useful site for the battleground of critical media literacy curricula.

Research Implications

As the Colonel Arnhart scandal indicated, the military is cognizant of the way it represents females. The findings of this study suggest that there continue to be underlying, embedded notions of essentialized femininity found in contemporary representations of female soldiers. Even when it is capitalized upon (e.g., using women as public relations), this femininity is never *celebrated* to the extent that gendered masculinized soldierhood is triumphed. In this recognition lies a key contribution of this research: the vast amount of female media representation – of all kinds – continues to belittle women based on cultural tropes of women's inferiority (Newsom, et. al., 2011; Lin, 1999; Macdonald, 1995). This is essentially patriarchy in representation; and within this patriarchal media system, women nearly always lose.

This research suggests that the military move in a new direction – not necessarily by highlighting that females can be both accepted *and* feminine in the military – but by resisting any discourse that associates negative attitudes with femininity at all. This may mean enacting policies that strictly prohibit the usage of denigrating feminized slurs (e.g., pussy, bitch, wimp) directed at cadets during boot camp. In addition, because audiences do have tremendous power in co-constructing narratives, the military must be more vigilant in monitoring degrading commenters towards women soldiers on its social media accounts. We as audiences should also practice what many commenters already do, and that is attempting to contribute our own voices, images, and stories of female soldiers who do not get media attention, such as veterans suffering from post-war injuries. Finally, male soldiers and superiors must speak up and act by defending unfair representations of female soldiers or unfair critiques of their inherent abilities to serve.

Closing: The Future of Feminism and The Military

The introduction and chapter 2 of this study broadly framed how female soldier representation in recruiting materials can be viewed through the evolution of an emerging fourth-wave feminist movement. These representations are closely tied to the call for critical media literacy in schools (Kellner & Share, 2007), which may perhaps be a key cornerstone of fourth-wave feminism. So far, fourth-wave feminism has been limited to the virtual world. Is critical media literacy practice and pedagogy the next step? Additionally, does or will fourth-wave feminism provide spaces to critique gendered aspects of state institutions – which allow the military's to continually deficitize its female soldiers? Further, will the virtual (and hopefully physical) spaces of fourth-wave feminism provide the conditions for critical, collaborative online interactions between young women considering military enlistment? Will those spaces make the imperialistic, colonizing defense practices of the military known? Will female soldiers themselves be involved in the construction of these spaces?

Ultimately, women will continue to join the military, and that is their choice. At no point in this paper do I wish to suggest that all female soldiers are subjugated by their male peers and superiors, that all female soldiers are uncomfortable with how they are represented, or that all female soldiers do not enjoy their military careers. But, given the reading of these recruitment materials tend to reify narratives positioning women in certain ways (daughters to be given away, domesticators, and gossipers), this work also suggests it is important for female soldiers to be able to be in control of their own representations.

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